"The Beginning After the End": Independent Music, Canadian Cultural Policy and
the Montreal Indie Music Scene

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a political economic analysis of the structures of the global music industry and the place of the independent music industry within it. The objective of this study is to map out and explore some of the changes that are currently transforming these industries. I focus particularly on those issues facing emerging, independent musical artists in a globalized context; including the reasons for the dominance of the industry by the "Big Four" multinational record labels; technological advancements that have led to a reduction of entry barriers for independent labels and artists; the roles cultural policies have played to help counter the dominance of the multinational record labels and the importance of musical "scenes" to the development of independent music. This study is approached from a Canadian perspective and includes a case study of the rise and international explosion of the Montreal indie music scene in 2005. Through this case study, I explore the impact of technological innovation on this scene and the ways in which Canadian cultural policies have helped support and promote independent Canadian artists, as well as examine the current relevance of these policies. Ultimately, I hope to draw broader conclusions about the shifting structures of the music industry and how independent artists can represent, maintain and grow their culture within the US-dominated global popular music industry.

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Why is this Canada's indie moment? [...] There is an essential truth and honesty to Canada's indie music, created by bands that operate free of the onerous pressure applied by the big record labels and their need for fat profit margins. It is music shaped in large part by our cultural landscape. [...] There is now a worldwide audience hungry for the latest independent Canadian musical exports. Our ideas are simple enough to understand, and we're not pushing anything ridiculous or pretentious. We are Canadian. We are successful. And we have our dignity intact. [...] This current crop of successful Canadian indie bands has helped revive music worldwide.

- Brendan Canning of Canadian band Broken Social Scene,
Time Canada, April 4, 2005.

INTRODUCTION

I was listening to the radio and couldn't believe my ears. It was August 2005 and I was driving through the Swedish countryside, flipping through local radio stations when I happened upon a station playing a song I vaguely recognized. After the song was over, the announcer came on and, from what I could tell, began listing the songs just aired in that play list. Not understanding Swedish, I had no idea what he was saying, until I heard the words "Ageless Beauty" and "Stars" and then something about Canada.

Here I was, in the wilds of the Swedish countryside, thousands of kilometres from Canada, listening to independent Canadian music by Montreal-based band Stars, a song that would not even be played on Canadian commercial radio. It didn't end there. While in Denmark a week later, I met a friend-of-a-friend who is a journalist with pre-eminent Danish music magazine *Gaffa*. When he discovered that I was from Canada, Montreal no less, he started inundating me with questions about all kinds of independent Canadian bands, some of whom *I* had scarcely even heard. I was shocked. Having previously worked in the independent Canadian music industry for over a decade, and still following it with keen interest, I knew that there was a renaissance of sorts concerning independent Canadian music, particularly indie bands coming out of

Montreal, aided by recent high profile articles in magazines such as *Spin*, *Rolling Stone*, *Time* and even the *New York Times*; but I had no idea of its reach and depth. This got me thinking: What is the reason for the seemingly sudden international interest in Canadian independent music?

Research Problematic

Canada has had a long tradition of exporting top-selling, internationally renowned recording artists like Celine Dion, Bryan Adams, Alanis Morissette, Shania Twain and Avril Lavigne. Independent Canadian artists, however, have rarely generated much interest beyond a couple of thousand units in domestic sales, a few cross-country tours, and a small but dedicated local fan following — certainly not international sales and an international fan base, all without the support of a major label. This raises questions as to the reasons not only for the rise of Canadian independent artists (specifically, those from Montreal), but also the rise of independent artists and the independent music industry in general, over the last ten years. What structural shifts have occurred in the global industry that have allowed for the recent emergence of so many independent artists? What are the contributing factors that have catapulted Canadian independent artists into the global music spotlight? More specifically: What elements contributed to the unusually high number of independent artists from Montreal garnering international attention, which led to Montreal being dubbed, in turn, the new "It" music scene? These are some of the questions and issues I will be addressing in this thesis.

Rationale for the Study

Over the last decade, the global music industry has undergone unprecedented changes, affecting many aspects of the industry. Primary among these shifts and

changes is the dominant role played by the now "Big Four" multi-national record labels: Universal Music, Sony Music Entertainment, EMI and Warner Music, in the global, popular music industry. The incredible technological advancements made over the last thirty years have also completely transformed music production and distribution, including the development of affordable means of digital music production, small and compact digital music file formats such as MP3s, the internet, a free, digital, global distribution network, illegal and legal music download sites, as well as social networking and user-generated web sites like MySpace and YouTube. The result is the beginnings of a significant shift of power from the few controlling trans-national music labels, to the mass of independent artists and labels.

In short, despite the forces of globalization, which allow for the continued dominance of the Big Four record companies within the global music industry, recent technological innovations have allowed for a more significant emergence of independent musicians/artists. Much has been written, both academically and in the popular press, including numerous articles by Will Straw, Simon Frith, Jack Bishop and Mark Fox, and features in diverse publications such as the *New York Times* and *Billboard* magazine, about the most recent wave of globalization and the transformation of traditional music industry structures. There is no definitive answer, however, as to what extent the industry will shift and what new business models will take hold and dominate. Speculation abounds.

While there are many fascinating aspects to this debate, it is too vast a topic to effectively examine within the context of a Master's thesis. By examining certain key aspects of this bigger picture, however, I believe one can shed light on some of the crucial developments currently transforming the global popular music industry. Furthermore, many of these areas have been underrepresented and overlooked, both in academia and the press.

The negative effects of globalization on sovereign nation cultures has also garnered attention over the last decade, with a significant number of studies dedicated to the countering effects of cultural policies that have been instituted in countries such as England, Ireland, France and Canada. The majority of these studies, including those by Michael Dorland, Marc Raboy, Peter Grant and Chris Wood, however, focus on the impact of cultural policies on the film and television industries and, to a lesser extent, on the publishing industry. There has been very little written about cultural policies with regard to the music industry. This is particularly the case in Canada, where the independent music industry has enjoyed steady growth over the last forty years and whose independent artists have, more recently, exploded onto both national and global stages — largely as a result of the implementation of the aforementioned cultural polices. While independent Canadian artists such as The Arcade Fire, Wolf Parade, the Dears, Sam Roberts and Stars, among others, have enjoyed a certain amount of attention as a direct result of their international success, the reasons for this success have not yet been fully explored.

The focus of this thesis will therefore be the examination of a cross-section of these topical subjects: the roles globalization and technological innovation have played in creating and transforming the power structures in the global music industry; the role Canadian cultural policies have played in countering some of the negative effects of globalization on independent Canadian music artists, as well as the central role these policies have and continue to play in the birth, growth and maintenance of the Canadian independent music industry; and, finally, the recent emergence of independent Canadian artists onto the international music stage and the role that technological innovation and cultural policies play in this new reality.

Objective

The objective of this thesis is to map out and explore some of the issues facing emerging, independent (pop, rock, electronica, etc.) musical artists in a globalized context. This study will investigate issues surrounding the reasons for the traditional dominance of the global music industry by a handful of trans-national media corporations, as well as the more recent technological advancements that have led to a lowering of entry barriers for independent artists. I will also be exploring the cultural policies that have been implemented in order to curb the dominance of multinational corporations — specifically, the effectivity of these policies in developing the careers of emerging, independent musical artists in a rapidly changing global music landscape. I will be examining these issues within a Canadian context, particularly through a case study of the Montreal indie music scene between 2004 and 2006, highlighting the growth and ultimate international "explosion" of the scene in 2005. My goal is to draw broader conclusions about the changing structures of the music industry and the roles played by technological innovation, Canadian cultural policy and the nature of musical scenes. Ultimately, I wish to shed some light on the question: Is this truly, in the words of Montreal band Stars, "The Beginning After the End" of the global music industry as we know it?

Methodology

This study will take the form of an exploratory, structural mapping of the global music industry in a cultural policy context and will be approached from a political economic perspective in order to elucidate the roles played by the various stakeholders involved in the global popular music industry: trans-national media corporations; the "Big Four" major record labels (Universal Music, Sony Music Entertainment, EMI and Warner Music); independent labels; industry lobby groups; industry associations and unions; the

independent Canadian music industry; independent artists; government; the public interest; music consumers; and broadcasters.

Through my involvement in the Canadian independent music industry, I have developed many contacts and have conducted interviews with some of these stakeholders in order to provide more insight into this study. Some of these interview subjects wished to remain anonymous; I have respected their wishes by withholding their names. My experience in the independent Canadian music industry spans the decade of the 1990s, working as a freelance sound engineer as well as working for independent artist managers, record labels, concert bookers and marketing and promotion companies. I have also been an active participant in the Montreal independent music scene, having played and continuing to play in a variety of local, Montreal independent bands. More recently, I have become involved with FACTOR (the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings), a private, non-profit organization that administers public and private funding to support the independent Canadian music industry, where I manage the organization of peer-evaluation jury sessions and represent the organization in the Montreal area. All FACTOR-related information contained in this study is that which is available to the public via their web site as well as in their annual reports.

While this thesis will explore many of the important issues and stakeholders that ultimately contribute to the global music industry (and I will provide as complete an overview and as detailed an analysis as space will permit), it is important to note that this study will function more as an exploratory investigation than as a conclusive study.

Definitions

Throughout this study, I will continuously be referring to a few key terms and would therefore like to define and contextualize them. When using the term "music

industry" I am not simply referring to one industry, but to many industries and sectors which contribute to and generate revenue from music, including record labels, distribution companies, publishers, concert promoters, etc. Some of the terms to which I will be referring are interchangeable and others, that are seemingly so, are, however, distinct and carry completely different meanings. When making reference to the globally dominant music industry, I will be referring to it interchangeably as the "majors", the "trans-nationals" or "multinationals". I will also be referring to the "independent", "indie" music industry or "indies." In this case, "independent" or "indie" refers to any artists or companies operating independently of the "major" or "trans-national" music industry, i.e., the Big Four record companies. When referencing the genre "indie music" (the musical genre often loosely and contentiously associated with the sound of music produced by independent artists and labels, i.e. "indie rock", "indie pop"), I will make specific reference to it in order to differentiate it from the term "indie" meaning "independent."

I will also make reference to the "Montreal indie music scene". While there are arguably many distinct "scenes" within this seemingly all-encompassing one, I will be specifically referring to and focusing on the predominantly Anglophone independent music community from which a few artists, and the companies which support them, have emerged and garnered international attention. While there is undeniably a vibrant Francophone independent music scene in Montreal, and a distinct French Canadian independent music industry, these areas form far too vast a topic to adequately explore here and ultimately fall beyond the scope of this thesis.

Chapter Breakdown

The study will consist of three core chapters: History/Overview of the Power Structures of the Global Music Industry; Overview of Canadian Cultural Policies; and an

Overview of the Canadian Independent Music Industry and the Montreal Indie Music Scene from 2004 to 2006.

History/Overview of the Power Structures of the Global Music Industry

The first chapter will function as a historical exploration and overview of the global music industry, as well as the traditional power structures established through the control over the production and distribution of musical works. As much of my research is focused on issues of power and agency within a context of globalized structures, I will be drawing from some of the theoretical approaches posited by Vincent Mosco in his book *Political Economy of Communication* as the basis for a brief political economic analysis of the global music industry, its structures and the relationship to the independent music industry. The three primary entry points for a political economic study that Mosco outlines — commodification, spatialization and structuration — will be used to examine the economic and political issues that contribute to the structure(s) of the global music industry.

Within the context of the impact of technology on the shifting power structures in the global music industry, I will examine the history of technological advancements made throughout the 20th century, including the development of affordable digital recording equipment and file-compression standards such as MP3s; the development of the internet; illegal file-sharing networks such as Napster; legal music download sites such as iTunes; and social-networking and user-generated sites such as MySpace and YouTube.

Overview of Canadian Cultural Policies

Chapter Two will provide an overview of Canadian cultural policies, including an examination of the nature of these policies, the reasons why they were created, and their

ultimate goals. Peter Grant and Chris Wood's text *Blockbusters and Trade Wars: Popular Culture in a Globalized World*, which investigates the history, development and future of Canadian cultural policy with respect to the encroaching forces of globalized entertainment, will form the basis for this chapter in order to elucidate an overview and analysis of Canadian cultural policies and how they relate to the Canadian independent music industry.

I will be specifically applying their concept of the "Cultural Tool Kit", which consists of a matrix of the six cultural policies the authors claim necessary to maintain and grow a distinctly Canadian culture, to the independent Canadian music industry. I will use this analysis to evaluate the overall effectivity of Canadian cultural policies in protecting and promoting Canadian independent music in the context of the globalized music industry.

Overview of the Canadian Independent Music Industry and the Montreal Indie Music Scene from 2004 to 2006

Chapter Three will give an overview of the development of the independent Canadian music industry, particularly the evolving roles played by Canadian cultural policies in helping to carve out a place for independent Canadian music within an industry otherwise dominated by the foreign, Big Four multinationals. The works of Will Straw, particularly his article "The English Canadian Recording Industry Since 1970," will be used to structure this examination.

This chapter will also focus on the recent explosion of the Montreal indie music scene from 2004 to 2006. This examination will take the form of a case study, where I will explore, through an examination of the stakeholders in this "scene", some of the structural changes that have given these artists unprecedented abilities to reach new and larger audiences. An examination of musical scenes (local and global, real and

virtual) will be included in this chapter, specifically the importance of such scenes in this new era in the evolution of the global music industry. I will be drawing on the work of Holly Kruse in her book *Site and Sound: Understanding Independent Music Scenes*, to examine Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" and its relationship to musical scenes.

Expected Significance of the Study

Through this study, I will explore the roles Canadian cultural policies have played and continue to play in the development of the independent Canadian music industry and emerging Canadian independent artists and, based on my findings, will make policy recommendations. I will develop an understanding as to how these artists can continue to grow their careers in the increasingly competitive and crowded global commercial music industry.

Ultimately, I hope that this study will further contribute to ongoing discussions concerning the constantly evolving structures of the global music industry, the place emergent, independent artists occupy within it, the ways in which these artists can further be supported in order to carve out a larger niche in the American-dominated, global commercial music industry and thus encourage further cultivation of the space required for the creation of independent and more varied voices.

CHAPTER ONE — History/Overview of the Power Structures of the Global Music Industry

Culture represents who we are, who we have been and what we strive to become. Culture represents our unique values. Culture, however, is not stagnant: it moves, it changes, it evolves. In order for culture to flourish, it needs to be open to new and foreign ideas. However, it can also be "...impoverished if it is dominated by the voice of another country." (Grant & Wood, p. 5)

As a result of contemporary globalization, many fear that this is happening to national cultures around the world, since those who dominate the global economy, also dominate the trade in and export of culture. This is why we can eat at a McDonald's in Hong Kong, drink Coke in Johannesburg, listen to American Hip Hop in Moscow, and watch the latest Hollywood blockbuster in Sao Paulo. The problem is, when was the last time we saw a Russian film in Boise, Idaho? Listened to Bhangra in Madison, Wisconsin? Watched the latest Japanese reality TV show in Houston, Texas? Read a Peruvian novel in Wichita, Kansas?

While many academics have previously argued that this is a result of American "cultural imperialism," there has been much debate recently over this term. As argued by Siva Vaidhyanathan, the term originally coined by Herbert Schiller in the 1970s to explain the growing global cultural dominance by predominantly US-based commercial media companies, is now a little outdated. Vaidhyanathan argues that it is not the predominantly American content that is dominating global cultures, but more so the structures through which the content flows: "...it seems that if there is a dominant form of cultural imperialism, it concerns the pipelines, not the products — the formats of distribution and the terms of access and use. What flows from North to South does not matter as much as how it flows, how much revenue the flows generate, and who may use the elements of such flows." (Vaidhyanathan, p. 125)

The problem, therefore, comes down to the question of who controls the structure and the network. In the case of the global circulation of culture, this power lies in the hands of a few trans-national media corporations. Some of these firms are located in the US, others in Europe and Japan. Because of issues surrounding the nature of Creative Clusters and the Economics of Scale (among other issues that will be defined and examined in more detail in the following chapter), the majority of the content produced by these trans-national media conglomerates is produced in Hollywood, for an American audience. Hence, the predominance of American culture in the global cultural industries.

Because the trans-national media corporations control the means of production and the distribution of cultural products, acting as gatekeepers to the cultural industries, it has become increasingly difficult for independent, distinct voices to break through these barriers and be heard. This not only applies to global national cultures, but also to independent expression within the United States. (Vaidhyanathan, p. 126) However, due to recent technological developments, we are starting to see a slow shift in power within cultural industries as control over these pipelines begins to transform. Nowhere is this more evident than in recent developments in the global music industry.

The internet has revolutionized the ways in which we communicate. This decentralized, arguably egalitarian communication medium has been idealized as a new channel that facilitates the free-flow of ideas, knowledge, information and creativity — a place where everything is, for those who have the economic means to access it, accessible and free. Furthermore, this new medium has facilitated global communication and, as some would argue, facilitated the creation of a new "public space" and the return of "public man". (Poblocki, p.2) While there is some truth to this somewhat utopian view, the internet as communication tool has also been viewed by some as a new economic frontier.

The commercialization and commodification of the internet has spawned a new arena for the struggle between public and commercial interests. Nowhere is this more evident than in the struggle between the multinational record companies and users of peer-to-peer (P2P) file trading networks. The multinationals are attempting to further extend their control and dominance of the global music industry through the acquisition of, and control over, not only terrestrial modes of production and distribution, but those also on the virtual frontier. This most recent struggle, however, is not a new one. The history of the struggle for power in the global music industry is long, and one within which technological developments have played a key role. Those who control the industry, traditionally, have been those who exercise control over the means of production and distribution of the cultural product — in this case, music.

This chapter will examine the ways in which technological innovation has affected, if not determined, the overall balance of power within the structures of the global music industry. I will examine the impact technological developments have had on the American music industry over the past century and how the multinational record companies have traditionally gained control over new technologies in order to maintain control over production and distribution. The pivotal role played by independent labels and musicians in the development of the American music industry will also be examined; particularly, the ways in which technological developments have benefited the independent music industry and artists, and how they have acted to lift market entry barriers. I will also examine the most recent technological innovations in production and distribution and the effects these developments have had on power relations in the music industry, as well as examining the broader implications of this new struggle. This examination will be approached from a political economic perspective in order to further elucidate the overall structures of the global, multi-national music industry and set the tone for the themes that will re-emerge through this thesis.

The Political Economy of the Global Music Industry

Vincent Mosco defines political economy as "the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources." (Mosco, p. 2) Mosco advocates not simply an economic and political analysis, but also the inclusion and importance of historical context in the analysis; what he refers to as "the social totality," essentially "the social relations that make up political, economic, social and cultural areas of life." (ibid, p.5)

Political economic analysis must therefore address the relations of power and wealth to "our systems of mass media, information and culture." (ibid) Mosco also advocates "social praxis" — defined as "the fundamental unity of thinking and doing" (ibid) — and highlights its role in political economic analysis. I will incorporate these elements into my analysis of the global music industry, using the structure of Mosco's three entry points for political economic analysis: commodification, spatialization and structuration.

Commodification

Mosco defines commodification as "the process of taking goods and services which are valued for their use and transforming them into commodities which are valued for what they can earn in the marketplace." (ibid, p.10) Mosco highlights the significance of commodification for communications research in that "communication practices and technologies contribute to the general commodification process throughout society" and that it is "an entry point to understand specific institutions and practices." (ibid) This precisely highlights the reason for its inclusion in this study.

While the subject of the commodification of music itself requires a much more in-depth analysis than I could hope to accomplish here, I will touch upon some basic concepts to elucidate the central role it plays in discussions surrounding Mosco's main entry point for a political economic analysis. As we will see later on in this chapter, the history of music as a commodity has evolved with the continuing development of the global recording industry. Through technical innovation, music has become a commodity in that it is available for purchase as a physical medium, be it vinyl disc, cassette, eight-track, CD or, arguably now, digital file — and thus, "owned." The notion of "music as commodity" is precisely the notion on which the global music industry has been built, and is, ironically, the same notion that now threatens to destroy that very industry. Thus, many of the tensions that have emerged between the independent music industry and artists and the Big Four record companies, centre around the commodification of music.

Without falling into the trap of favouring and over-romanticizing the role played by the independent music industry, as posited by David Hesmondhalgh (1996), it is clear that much of the impetus for creation and development in this industry comes purely from the love of music and the desire to bring "independent" music to appreciative audiences. The primary motivating factor for many independent artists and the independent music industry is not to make millions of dollars through the commodification of music, but rather to create music for the sake of creating music and have it reach audiences who will value it.

This emphasis of "music over money" generally adopted by the independent music industry is further exemplified through the alternative and more egalitarian structures of the independent music industry. From more equitable revenue shares with artists to, as many have argued, a more ethical set of business practices in general, the structures of the independent music industry is quite contrary to and often at odds with the ways in which the global music industry operates. This is one of the reasons why,

generally speaking, the multinationals, through their trade association the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) have so militantly opposed illegal online peer-to-peer file trading whereas, generally speaking, the independent music industry, loosely represented by A2IM (American Association of Independent Music) in the US, tends to embrace it, valuing the exposure independent artists experience as a result, more than any loss of revenue.

With the sharp decline in record sales over the last ten years, arguably due in part to internet "piracy", and with fewer and fewer consumers willing to pay for music in any kind of physical or even digital format, the future of music as commodity is questionable. As will be explored in more detail later on, music is increasingly becoming less of a commodity and more of a promotional tool. The future, therefore, of "music as commodity" may ultimately render Mosco's key entry point for a political economic analysis of the global music industry, irrelevant.

Spatialization

Mosco defines spatialization as "the process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life." (Mosco, p.12) Traditionally, economists had been concerned with defining and measuring labour time. It was Marx, however, who suggested that "capitalism eliminates space and time" (ibid) as technological advancements in transportation and communication, motivated by capitalism, decreased spatial and temporal barriers to the increased flow of goods, people and ideas throughout the globe. Mosco highlights the centrality of communication with respect to spatialization insofar as "communication and information processes and technologies promote flexibility and control throughout the industry, but particularly within the communication and information sectors." (ibid) Mosco further points out that "spatialization encompasses the process of globalization, the worldwide restructuring of

industries and firms." (ibid) Nowhere else is this more apparent than in the global music industry.

Characterized in recent years by a mass of mega-mergers, horizontal concentration and vertical integration, the music industry has gone from a once somewhat competitive market, supporting a number of different-sized companies, to the complete dominance of not only the North American market, but, due to the forces of globalization, the dominance of the global music industry by four major labels. These companies are controlled by large trans-national corporations whose business interests span the communications/media spectrum: Universal Music Group, is owned by France-based Vivendi; Sony Music Entertainment, now wholly owned by the Sony Corporation after the October 2008 buyout of the remaining 50% holdings of Bertelsmann, which once held equal share in Sony-BMG; Warner, most recently bought by a group of investors led by Canadian, Edgar Bronfman, Jr.; and EMI, now owned by London-based Terra Firma Capital Partners. There is no better example of an entire industry being dominated by a handful of companies which have come to dominate the globe, than that of the global music industry. (Please see Appendix A – Overview of the "Big Four" Multinational Record Companies and Appendix B – Global Music Market Sales Shares)

Within this broad concept of spatialization, the independent music industry seemingly works against the expanding powers of the Big Four and globalization, in that the mere existence of the independent music industry offers some alternative, no matter how small, to the music being cranked out by the majors — thus perpetuating, to some degree, musical diversity. This is increasingly the case as the indie industry and artists are able to take a larger piece of the global music market thanks to the ways in which recent technological innovations have lowered many entry barriers. As distribution and marketing channels such as the internet open up access to increasingly diverse music, the indies are effectively countering the effects of globalization and spatialization. As we

will explore in Chapter Three, the recent explosion of the Montreal indie music scene on the international stage is a perfect example of this phenomenon.

While the independent music industry is gaining ground in the global music industry, as we will see, Holly Kruse (2003) and David Hesmondhalgh (1996) both note that it is virtually impossible for the independents to completely separate from the structures established by the majors. While independent labels may run independently, they are reliant on the majors for certain aspects of the business.

For instance, for maximum reach and exposure, an indie label will have to sign a distribution agreement with the distribution wing of a major because they are the ones who own and control the distribution networks and channels. (Kruse, p.41) Many independents also enter into licensing agreements with major labels in which the indie label will have the rights to an artist for a certain territory, but may go on to license those rights to a major for another territory. (ibid)

Other arrangements that occur between indie labels and majors include the "farm team" arrangement whereby indies essentially function as large A&R (Artist and Repertoire) departments for the majors: discovering fresh, new talent, working to develop the artist and then, once the artist has gained critical mass, they are signed to a major. (ibid, p.49)

Thus, by continuing to embrace new technologies and inventive ways to help grow the market for their artists, the independent music industry continues to penetrate and thrive in the new global, digital economy, while simultaneously breaking free from some of the constricting structures developed by the majors; independent labels and artists can thus, to a certain extent, work outside of the global industry structures and remain competitive.

Structuration

Mosco defines structuration as "the broadening of the conception of social class from its structural or categorical sense, which defines it in terms of what some have and what others do not, to incorporate both a relational and a constitutional sense of the term." (Mosco, p. 13) In other words, structuration examines the connections between social class and the relationship to the dominant ideology. Structuration can also be defined as agency, particularly in the context of corporate and government structures. (ibid)

With respect to communications, structuration often refers to issues surrounding "access to the means of communication and the reproduction of these inequalities in social institutions." (ibid) Class is but one aspect; race and gender must also be considered. These issues must be examined within the context of the dominant ideology or hegemony. Without exception, these issues are most certainly present in the global music industry.

Access issues have undoubtedly been an issue in the context of the global music industry and one which will be examined in detail here. As we will see, traditionally, the control over the means by which music was produced and distributed was held tightly by the major labels. Due to the high cost of production equipment, the only way an individual artist could access the means to record an album was through a recording contract — which, in many cases, meant surrendering their artistic integrity to the major. Control over and access to distribution channels have also traditionally been held by the major labels. However, with recent technological advancements, these access issues have greatly diminished.

With the advent of inexpensive home recording equipment, computer technology and software applications, as well as the growth in the mass adoption of MP3 technology and the internet, traditional access barriers to the production and distribution of music

have been significantly reduced, specifically with respect to the independent music industry. However, these barriers have not been altogether eliminated. While the balance of power has begun to shift, from the controlling majors to the independent music industry and individual artists, with more and more artists taking control of the production and distribution of their musical works, there are still those who do not have access to these kinds of technologies.

The first access barrier is cost. While there is a world of difference between the cost of buying equipment for a traditional recording studio and the cost of buying a computer enabled with the appropriate software and an internet connection, the cost of these basic elements is still higher than many can afford. This is obviously, therefore, a class issue, which also inevitably encompasses race and gender issues as well.

Aside from monetary access barriers, there are also knowledge access barriers. One must not only be familiar with computers and internet navigation, but also have working knowledge of sound-recording software, MP3 file compression technology and knowledge of where to market oneself on the internet. As remarked by a local independent Montreal musician:

> One of the primary challenges facing independent artists in the new digital reality of the industry is having to learn skills outside of simply making music. The knowledge of ever changing promotional tools is almost essential now for a band to get any notice. (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

In some cases, there are also social barriers that restrict access to this kind of knowledge, for example, the still prevalent idea that women and girls are not as technically savvy as boys and men — therefore discouraging some girls and women from attempting to master new technologies.

Issues of Power

By employing Mosco's three entry points of commodification, spatialization and structuration to a political economic analysis of the global music industry, the inherent power structures of the industry are revealed. This kind of analysis reveals how difficult it is for indies to become truly independent and maintain their autonomy while being forced to operate within the power structure built and implemented by the controlling majors.

Competing with the majors at their own game and within their structures is a losing battle. The only way that indies can become and remain competitive is to play by different rules. The global digital economy has fundamentally changed the way in which the music industry can and must conduct business. Artists and those working in the industry must be given the skills, knowledge and tools to learn how to work the system in different, more efficient ways. Some of these emerging models will be explored more in depth in Chapter Three where we will examine some of the more community-oriented processes that have been adopted by some members of the Montreal indie music scene.

With a better understanding of the new digital economy, those working in the industry now realize that because of technological advancements such as the mass proliferation of digital technology and internet-based file trading and digital-download networks, traditional access barriers to the production and distribution of music have been significantly lowered. However, the independent music industry continues to face emerging challenges.

In order to develop a better understanding of the present and the future, we must examine the past. By exploring the historical development of the American music industry and some of the key turning points that have shaped the global music industry, we will be able to develop a better understanding as to how these structures have been

replicated the world over, including in Canada, and how the independent music industry can find new and inventive ways to work within or around them.

History/Overview

The music industry has always been highly competitive. Since the invention of the phonograph by Emile Berliner in 1888, (Kasaras, p.10) and the realization of the potential of this new medium, there has been a struggle for control of this industry. Initially, the companies who invented the technologies subsequently signed the artists, manufactured, released, marketed and distributed the albums. From the inception of the industry, these companies not only controlled the production and distribution of the products, but subsequently also controlled what was produced, thus creating a monopoly.

By the 1930s, two big record companies emerged as the dominant players in this relatively young industry: RCA Victor and Columbia, jointly holding a virtual monopoly. (Kennedy & McNutt, p. xiii) However, with constant technological innovation, and the expiration of patents over "new" recording technology, came a reduction in cost and a slight opening of this new market to competition, resulting in the establishment of pioneering independent labels such as Gennett and Paramount. (Kennedy & McNutt, p. xv) As we will see, this proved a critical step in the survival and growth of the majors and the industry as a whole.

While these new independent labels were too small to compete with the established majors of the time, the indies were able to carve out a niche market and began experimenting with and recording locally popular fusion genres of music. These emerging fringe genres were met with growing interest as they were seen as an alternative to the commercial "popular" musical genres such as classical, opera, vaudeville and later, dance music, that the majors of the time were issuing. Genres such

as Jazz and Bebop were developed and popularized by indie labels like Dial, King and Duke-Peacock Records, which were committed to releasing locally known artists, specializing in other lesser-known genres. (Kennedy & McNutt, p. xiii)

It was only when the major labels noticed the burgeoning popularity and commercial potential of these newly "popular" genres that they began to take action. (Kennedy & McNutt, p. xviii) The solution was simple: license those emerging artists from the indies and begin to develop similar artists on their own labels. This trend can be seen in the popularization of Jazz, Bebop and Big Band through the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, to the fusing of country and R&B in the 1950s, forming Rockabilly, the granddaddy of Rock 'n' Roll.

This unofficial licensing arrangement also had, and continues to have, limited benefits for the indies. The licensing of new acts to the majors created another much needed revenue stream for the indies, and ultimately helped them stay afloat financially. The place of indies in the industry has been traditionally characterized not only by their role as "farm teams", but also by how they have incorporated the technical advances spearheaded by majors, as well as the technical discards disposed of by the majors.

The introduction of radio was one arena which both the indies and the majors learned to use to their full advantage. Initially, the invention of radio dealt a huge blow to the majors; it was seen as the technology that was going to destroy the fledgling recording industry. Coinciding with the market crash of 1929 and the resulting economic depression of the 1930s, radio gained enormous popularity as it was so economical: one needed only to buy the radio itself. There was no need to buy albums when the radio broadcasts afforded hours and hours of free listening pleasure. (Kasaras, p. 8) The majors were struggling with the new reality of declining record sales. For the indies, however, radio helped encourage the further development of artists working in "fringe" genres of music, since mainstream programming could not satisfy all elements of the

market, proving to be an excellent outlet for the promotion and popularization of "indie" fringe musical genres.

The majors, however, soon found a way around the challenges posed by this new technology and were successful at incorporating radio into the music industry structure and exploiting it for its own benefit. With radio at the time dependent on "stars" from other entertainment industries such as the film industry to draw ratings, the music industry decided to create its own star system and promote them on the radio; radio as a promotional tool for the music industry was born. As radio grew in popularity, subsequently, so too did the profits of the major labels and their artists. (Kasaras, p. 8)This marked the first triumph of the music industry over threatening new technologies.

With the invention and mass adoption of radio came other important changes. While radio satisfied some economic barriers for consumers, such as the need to purchase both "hardware" (the phonograph) and "software" (the albums), there were two downsides to the new medium: limited music programming and the lack of control for consumers over what they listened to and when they listened to it. (ibid, p.9) These issues were again solved by technology.

1948 saw the invention of two technologies that would further help the music industry grow and expand: the transistor radio and the LP. These technologies improved the sound quality of both media, decreasing the size and weight of the machines and therefore encouraging portability. The durability, particularly of vinyl, was greatly improved and, with the reduction in cost to the consumer, these devices soon appeared in everyone's homes and solidified the concept of music as commodity. (ibid) The introduction of these technologies again also aided in lowering entry barriers for the indies. Coupled with an affordable price, the buying of albums and the commodification of music fuelled the beginnings of fetishism. The collection of certain genres of music helped create more of a demand for the "fringe" genres that indies were putting out.

Genres such as Rockabilly (that evolved into Rock 'n' Roll, the most popular and long-lived mainstream genre that has dominated music for over forty years), was originally recorded and released by indie record labels.

The huge radio and commercial success first of Rockabilly, then Rock 'n' Roll, at the beginning considered to be only "fringe" genres produced by indie labels, caught the attention of the always-hungry major labels. The huge success of the likes of Bill Haley, Carl Perkins, Bo Diddly, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Louis, Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper and of course Elvis, tipped the majors to what a commercial opportunity this genre was, and the industry devoted its energy to producing more of this kind of music. Other genres pioneered by the majors, such as Jazz (also, originally, produced and released through the indies), took a back seat in favour of the most commercially viable genres. (Kennedy & McNutt, p. xv)

The same trends can be seen throughout this history of popular American music: from the co-option of Folk, Soul and Motown in the 60s, Disco and Punk in the 70s, to Metal, New Wave, College Rock, Alternative and Hip Hop in the 80s, to Grunge and Electronica in the 90s and, ironically, "indie rock" and "indie pop" music today. To the present day, the indies continue to be mined not only for their successful discoveries of niche markets, but also for the artists producing these successful "fringe" genres. The very real economic reasons for this will be examined in more detail in the following chapter.

The next big technological change came in the 1970s with the invention of the cassette tape. Again, the introduction of this medium benefited the consumer in that it was a more economical option, and again more compact and easily transported — effectively allowing the industry to reach all pockets of the globe, further expanding the market. (Kasaras, p. 10) However, there was one big signifying difference between the introduction of the cassette and the LP: the cassette was the first medium available to

the general public at a reasonable consumer cost that featured re-recording or copying capabilities. Initially this caused many headaches for the industry as piracy concerns ran rampant. However, as the history of the industry has proven, when a technology poses a threat to the majors, it seems to create new opportunities for indie labels and artists. The same holds true vis-à-vis the introduction of the cassette.

This medium created a new opportunity for independent artists who were, for the first time in history, able to make rudimentary home recordings using an affordable recording device and a cassette. This, in turn, created a whole new counter-culture of cassette sales and exchanges and ultimately allowed for the manufacturing and distribution (via indie distributors and retail outlets), of indie cassettes which showcased the talents of unknown artists. As the quality of cassette recordings were of a noticeably lower sonic quality, combined with the levying of a "blank cassette tax," (Kasaras, p. 10) concerns quickly waned over piracy issues and the loss of control over the means of production and distribution by the major labels. Nonetheless, this was just the tip of the piracy iceberg for the majors.

The introduction of the CD to the commercial market by Sony/Phillips in 1980 (Schouhamer, p. 458) ushered in the digital age in the music industry. While the idea behind the CD was to offer a better sounding, cheaper and more portable product to consumers, the industry was further confronted with a technological development that would pose many problems down the line. As with cassette technology before it, digital technology enabled consumers with ability to copy material. The difference between cassette (analogue) and CD (digital) technology, however, is the fact that there is no loss of audio quality in the digital copy. Concerns over the development of these kinds of technologies only intensified with the introduction of digital compression technologies and the development of the internet.

MPEG 3, more commonly known as MP3 compression technology, takes the rather large digital audio file and compresses it into a much smaller file that can easily be stored, but more importantly, easily emailed or transferred online. This technology, combined with the vast distribution possibilities of the internet, and the development and mass adoption of illegal peer-to-peer file trading networks such as Napster in the late 1990s, dramatically changed the music industry forever.

For the first time in history, the music industry was faced with technology that it was not able to fully control nor effectively incorporate into its production and distribution practices. Ironically, in many ways these new digital technologies have delivered to consumers what the industry has been unsuccessful in providing over the last fifty years. Illegal digital file trading networks like Bit Torrent sites and legal download technology platforms like iTunes, allow music consumers the ability to access only the music they like. They are not forced to listen to music they are not interested in, as is the case with radio, nor are they forced to buy a whole album when all they want is one song, as with the LP, cassette and CD. These new technologies also allow consumers the ability to access and listen to music wherever they like — now more than ever with technology such as the iPod and cell phones. There remains, however, a significant issue: the fact that some consumers are still not paying for digital music downloads. This is indicative, not necessarily of an overall shift towards thievery and piracy, but an essential shift in the way in which we interact with music.

Just as music was not considered a commodity in the early part of the 20th century, music is no longer necessarily thought of as a commodity. As our relationship to music changes, so too must the music industry's. Music is increasingly being thought of more as a promotional tool than a product. If the music industry can adapt its business model to provide music as a promotional tool, rather then as a commodity, there might

still be hope. After all, this is how many of the independent labels in existence today are surviving. In many ways, this is how independent labels have always survived.

The Beginnings of a Great Shift

Benefits/Challenges for the Indies

As the Big Four struggle to control these new digital technologies, the indies, for the most part, have embraced them as they have further facilitated production and distribution and even the marketing of their music, allowing for less reliance on the Big Four, and ultimately, managing to put the control of music making and distribution in the hands of indie labels and artists. The technology used to record music is accessible and affordable, the means of distribution and marketing are, for the most part, free, far-reaching and defy the dominance and restrictions of major record companies — ultimately, the perfect system for the independent artist. Illegal file-trading networks such as LimeWire and Bit Torrent sites, legal digital-download sites such as iTunes and eMusic, and the more recent emergence of social networking sites like MySpace and user-generated sites like YouTube, not only allow for the sampling of free/low cost music, but an unlimited reach: the potential audience is global. It is important to recognize, however, the challenges that remain for the indies.

The fact that music is increasingly seen, particularly, for indie artists, as a promotional tool, has and will continue to help garner exposure for unknown independent artists. However, the less music is seen as a commodity, the less revenue artists will generate from the sale of music tracks regardless of delivery method. While independent artists have not generally generated huge sums through traditional album sales, these sales continue to represent the opportunity for a decent revenue stream for artists. This raises the question: How will independent artists generate revenue in a new model where music is no longer a commodity?

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While there has been much bemoaning of the death of the CD and the death of music sales, revenue is still being generated — just not as much as it once had. As with major label artists, indie artists are still selling traditional CDs; and both the majors and the indies are arguably selling more digital tracks through legal online download sites like iTunes and eMusic than through traditional brick and mortar retail points. Furthermore, some indie artists are even reverting to old media formats, releasing limited edition vinyl records of their albums to satisfy those who make an argument for the superior and "warmer" sound of vinyl, and the more satisfying tactile experience of holding vinyl and experiencing its accompanying artwork. This phenomenon, along with special edition albums, has created more demand and once again fetishized the physical product. While cassette technology is still viewed as inferior, some artists are capitalizing on retro nostalgia by placing digital versions of songs on USB keys and placing them in old cassette covers with unique cover designs; again, creating a unique and fetishized product. Taking things one step further, some artists are also selling physical packages yet including a special username and password to access the full album online or offering added value by providing exclusive free tracks online.

However, in order for artists to be able to sell any kind of product, there has to be a certain amount of awareness about the artist in order for fans to discover them and be willing to buy their product, regardless of how the product is being sold. This is where sites such as MySpace, YouTube and even traditional web sites have played an important role. Creating an online destination for anyone to visit and sample free tracks, get information on the artist, link to the artist's blog and upcoming tour dates, is key. By giving potential fans a chance to sample an artist's music, without having to pay for it, therefore removing risk, the potential fan is more likely to be willing to pay to either download some or all of the artist's songs, or buy related merchandise, or pay to see the artist play live in their city.

Touring is another key avenue for revenue generation. While an artist's music can be illegally downloaded and traded, nothing can replace the experience of a live show. This has traditionally been where independent artists have made a significant portion of their overall revenue as the majority of revenue generated from live shows goes directly into the artist's pockets, as opposed to the sale of albums. Live shows not only provide a solid revenue stream, but are also a way for artists to further cement their relationships with fans and affords an opportunity to sell albums and other merchandise (t-shirts, stickers, buttons, etc.) at shows. While touring used to be the promotional aspect of supporting a revenue-generating product, the album, it appears that the situation is now reversed: increasingly, the album or recording is now the promotional tool for the revenue-generating live show. This is most recently witnessed by British band Coldplay. Pending negotiations with their record label Parlophone, a subsidiary of EMI, the band is planning to give out free copies of their album to all those who attend an upcoming series of concerts in September 2009. (Camilli)

Growing numbers of artists are also exploring and benefiting from revenue streams generated from licensing opportunities. Not only do artists generate revenue when they license their music to be used in television shows, movies, video games and even advertising, but licensing opportunities can also greatly increase the profile and awareness of the artist. This has been seen repeatedly with the success of indie artists such as Montreal's own Patrick Watson, whose music was featured on *Grey's Anatomy*, as was the music of indie American artist Bon Iver. Then there are artists like Moby, perhaps the first artist to gain notoriety for this practice, who was virtually unknown outside of electronica music circles before he began to license his tracks to be used in television advertisements for cars, credit card companies, liquor and for inclusion in numerous movie soundtracks, thus making Moby a household name.

Other independent artists have also licensed their music for inclusion in video game soundtracks or (as in the case of UK-transplanted, Montreal resident and top-selling electronica DJ, Amon Tobin), asked to score the soundtrack for the video game *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory*. New media like cell phones also offer more opportunities for artists to license their music for products like ringtones, ringback tones, message alert tones and full track downloads. While licensing can be a lucrative revenue source, some independent artists refuse to license their music to any major corporation on the grounds that this goes against their morals, insofar as it is "selling out."

While the exposure garnered from licensing has proven to be a huge boon to those artists who can secure it, what about artists who can't? Carving out a space in the digital era nevertheless remains a challenge for many independent artists: How can indie artists get the attention of their potential fans in the first place? The traditional means of building a fan base still apply in the digital world, such as playing shows to build a local following, opening for other artists to gain new audiences, trying to secure radio airplay, playing festivals, securing press and touring. Some artists have seen success using new digital promotional tools such as MySpace, YouTube to catch the attention of influential bloggers and indie taste-making sites like Pitchfork.com (a site dedicated primarily to independent music criticism, news and artist interviews), but there is no secret formula yet to generating awareness in the internet age. Thus the tried and true method of word of mouth still applies; however, now indie artists have the benefit of a global, digital online environment to help spread the "word of mouth" faster and to a much broader audience than anyone could have ever imagined. Independent Montreal musician and music industry veteran Gary Jansz and Pop Montreal Festival Director, Dan Seligman concur:

> While digital media and digital distribution platforms are liberating
> and make a DIY ["Do It Yourself"] ethic easier, it's still no substitute
> for getting in a shitty van and getting in as many faces as possible

and making a connection with them [music fans] both viscerally but also pressing the flesh, talking with them and giving someone a chance to put flesh, bone and body in context with the music. (Gary Jansz) The internet works as a way to bring people to the shows. It's not that simple but it definitely helps for sure. (Dan Seligman) (Personal conversations March 6, 2009 and March 3, 2009, respectively)

Benefits to Consumers

Independent labels and musicians are not the only ones to embrace these new technologies. Music "consumers" have been the most ardent supporters of P2P file-trading technology as well as legal, online music downloading and streaming sites. These technologies are not only slowly shifting control back to the independent labels and artists, but also to the consumer. The consumer now makes decisions about his/her relationship to music: how they will listen, where they will listen and to whom they will listen. There is a prevailing belief among internet users in general, and P2P users in particular, that information should be free — more particularly, music. In the age of mega-mergers and corporate power, there is also a widespread negative perception of "big business," and in this way "stealing" music online is often justified as "payback" for years of perceived gouging of the consumer through the perceived exorbitantly high pricing of CDs throughout the 1980s and 1990s. (Kasaras, p.12)

After bemoaning the losses of sales through alleged "piracy," the major labels conceded to a price point of $0.99 per track as initiated by iTunes. This more reasonable price point has driven many music fans to move to legally downloading tracks. That said, this price point was a hard pill for the majors to swallow, as was the alternate price point of $0.69 per track announced in January 2009 by Apple. This news was balanced with the announcement that some tracks will be sold for $1.29, with full albums continuing to sell for $9.99. While these pricing changes have driven many music consumers to legally

purchase music online, there are still many who refuse to pay for music in this new

digital age. This continues to be a challenge for the majors.

Challenges to the Majors

While this adjustment in pricing has quelled some piracy concerns and the most

recent Apple announcement should help further encourage legal downloads, there

remains, however, the majors' uphill battle to fight consumers' "illegal" online file trading

which continues, partly in the guise of a political action. The sheer number of people

using illegal P2P systems indicates that there is "a new social reality of individuals

organizing themselves and their musical passions by developing relationships in

different MP3 communities." (ibid, p. 15) There is a real sense of identity and community

that develops in these networks and the most important aspect of the community is their

attitude towards copyright. As the numbers forming resistance continue to grow, it will

become increasingly difficult for the Big Four to attempt to take control of this

uncontrollable medium.

The initial actions taken by the Big Four record labels, through their trade

organization the RIAA, to stem internet piracy have not been successful. In fact, these

efforts have further managed to alienate their consumers. The infamous Napster case

saw the RIAA pitted against an independent company that facilitated the wide illegal

distribution of major label and independent artists' music. The aim of the RIAA was not

simply to shut down the system, but also to gain control over this new means of

distribution in order to subsequently increase profits. These actions were at odds with

the rights of P2P users, "fair use" and the value and maintenance of the commons, as

this struggle was not simply over the illegal trading of music files, but more so, over

copyright.

While a detailed discussion surrounding intellectual property rights and copyright issues with respect to the music industry is well beyond the scope of this thesis, these issues are worth mentioning as they have and continue to play an important role in the power struggles currently taking place in the global music industry. The efforts of the multinationals to continue to find ways to retain and enforce the intellectual property rights they hold are exemplified in the ways in which they continue to seek to control the means of production and distribution of music. Through the continued maintenance of "gatekeeping" practices with regards to the traditional promotional channels of radio, video and some online destinations, to the practice of DRM[1], and the growing adoption of "360" recording deals[2], which will be explored in more detail later on, the majors continue to seek out ways to retain and grow their intellectual property rights and ultimately, their revenue.

It is difficult to see what the future will hold, but one thing we have learned is that the structure of the global music industry is forever shifting and changing, and will continue to do so. In order to keep pace with these changes, the Big Four multinationals will need to adapt their model in order to benefit from technological innovation, not simply to try to stamp it out completely or incorporate it into the existing industry model. Whether or not this will happen remains to be seen.

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[1] DRM or Digital Rights Management is an access control technology applied to both CDs and digital files. Some major labels, such as Sony and other companies including Apple and Microsoft use DRM in order to control either the number of times a file is downloaded and/or to which devices that file is downloaded.

[2] "360" deals describe new recording contracts where a label takes their standard cut of CD and digital download sales, but also earns a percentage of event ticket profits, merchandise sales, endorsement deals and anything else that uses the artist's brand or music; essentially, claiming rights to anything and everything related to that artist.

Conclusion

The indies have been able to gain increasing access to various means of production thanks to developments that have lowered the cost of acquiring new technology, and have furthermore made significant inroads into setting up independent distribution and retail networks. The majors, however, continue to hold power over the majority of the means of production and distribution, and are therefore ultimately able to continue to dictate the overall structure of the industry.

As we become more fully entrenched in this new digital era where control over production and distribution is at stake, it is important to closely examine the positions of the various stakeholders. It is important to look to the past for clues about the present and the future. However, we must acknowledge the limits of doing so. Despite all we can learn from the history of the music industry, it is impossible to say with any certainty how things will turn out. Will the Big Four be successful in lobbying for control over new technologies? Will control over these technologies, and ultimately, creation and music, return to the creators? Will new Digital Rights Management technologies be developed, and/or more rigid intellectual property and copyright policies be implemented? As we will explore in the following chapter, there are other elements such as a variety of cultural policies that can be instituted to ensure the continued sustainability and growth of the independent music industry and artists.

CHAPTER TWO — Overview of Canadian Cultural Policies

Introduction

On August 27th, 2008, 2 500 people gathered in the streets of Montreal to protest the recent cuts to federal arts funding by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government. That month, the government had announced a total of $45 million in cuts to arts and cultural funding, including funding to the PromArts, Trade Routes, and Capacity Building programs, as well as the Stabilization Projects and various film and television funds. (Werb) Other protests took place in Toronto and Vancouver, all planned by a variety of arts and culture organizations. A Facebook campaign also saw over 10 000 people go "faceless for the arts" in protest.

The two programs hit hardest in this last round of cuts were PromArts, administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs, which provides international cultural travel grants, and Trade Routes, administered by the Department of Heritage, which provides funding assistance to export Canadian cultural products. PromArts lost its entire budget of $4.7 million, while Trade Routes lost $9 million. The Conservative cuts will essentially close both programs – PromArts in 2009 and Trade Routes in 2010. (PromArts and Trade Routes web sites)

The Canadian independent music industry was hit particularly hard by these cuts, as a large portion of the funding it receives for international export campaigns comes from the Trade Routes program. It could be argued that the recent international success of independent Canadian artists would not have been realized without the financial aid of federal funding programs like Trade Routes. One would expect an outcry over these cuts from the Canadian independent music industry, and indeed, protests across the country and online were heavily attended by those working in the arts, but most surprisingly, these protests were also attended by a large number of "ordinary" Canadian citizens. In

response to a statement made by Prime Minister Harper about the cuts, a Facebook group called "Ordinary Canadians DO SUPPORT the Arts, Mr. Harper. You are dead wrong." was created, and boasts over 60 000 members. These actions raise the question: Why has federal funding for the Canadian cultural sector become such a contested issue, galvanizing debate across the country?

Globalization, and the many issues that surround it, has raised major concerns not only among academics and researchers, but also among business leaders, economists, politicians and ordinary citizens. These concerns have grown over the last forty years alongside the growth of the many far-reaching effects globalization has had in all of these areas. Perhaps one of the greatest concerns about globalization has been its effect on global cultures.

With the rapid development of new technologies in recent years, particularly communication technologies, culture and cultural expression have been at the forefront of debates over globalization. There is growing concern about the endangerment and potential disappearance of distinct cultural identities. Much of this concern is rooted in the increasing dominance not only of American business and industry, but also of American culture. This is especially evident in the export, and subsequent adoption of American music across the globe, with Canada being particularly affected due to its geographic proximity.

Canada's reaction to the growing global dominance of American culture over the last forty years has been a political one. In the early 1970s, the federal government began to implement cultural policies and create new organizations and institutions to address this issue. Although there have been some changes, these policies, organizations and institutions are, for the most part, still in effect today. Cultural policies and programs administered by the Canadian Heritage Ministry constitute some of the primary means of support for emerging independent artists. These programs support the

creation, production, distribution, protection and export of distinctly Canadian cultural products.

As we will see, these policies and programs have proven crucial to the development and growth of the Canadian independent music industry. However, with recent technological developments effectively reducing some of the barriers to entry into the music industry, one must question the continued relevance of these programs and policies. Are they continuing to help independent Canadian artists and the independent music industry? Are they outdated? Are they irrelevant? These are some of the questions that will be explored in this chapter.

The objective of this chapter is therefore to provide an overview of these various cultural policies and their relationship to the Canadian independent music industry and independent Canadian artists. Some of the theories put forward by Peter Grant and Chris Wood in their book *Blockbusters and Trade Wars: Popular Culture in a Globalized World* will also be examined, particularly their notion of the "Cultural Tool Kit."

Setting the Stage

Aside from the need for supporting and promoting Canadian culture both domestically and internationally, there are even more pressing issues that have necessitated the creation and continued existence of federal cultural policies and programs. The last forty years have seen the development of new technologies at an incredible rate. This has created many opportunities, but also many challenges, particularly for the music industry.

As examined in the previous chapter, throughout the history of the American music industry, major labels have held most of the power and influence, as they have controlled the means of music production and distribution. Over the last twenty years, their power has grown exponentially as some of globalization's negative

effects have manifested themselves in the sheer number of mergers and acquisitions, resulting in the horizontal concentration and vertical integration of massive media and entertainment companies, further encouraged by deregulation/re-regulation, privatization and the opening of international markets. (Wasko, p. 144) This situation has given birth to a new global music industry ruled by the Big Four, which now produce and control 80% of the world's music. (BBC News)

As we will see, this has contributed to the global cultural dominance of American music, and has ensured the virtual impossibility of any kind of healthy competition in the global market. Although, ironically, this power structure has slowly begun to shift due to recent technological advancements, these are among the primary reasons for the necessity of implementing and maintaining Canadian cultural policies, as well as policies, organizations and programs that support the Canadian independent music industry.

The ability of the Canadian independent music industry, and independent artists, to remain competitive in the marketplace, and more importantly, to continue to produce distinctly Canadian music for Canadian and global audiences, greatly depends on the policies, organizations and programs created and maintained by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage. Thus the importance of analyzing the structures and functioning of these policies and programs is clear.

Canadian Cultural Policy

While there seems to be little published research on Canadian cultural policy and its relationship to Canadian culture, Chris Wood and Peter Grant's book *Blockbusters and Trade Wars: Popular Culture in a Globalized World* does a very good job of examining the negative effects of globalization on popular culture, and what Canada has done to combat these effects. The authors explore the reasons why pop culture has

been dominated by a select group of media companies, and why audiences are being exposed to an increasingly small number of generic pop cultural products. Grant and Wood also look at how governments around the world have been left struggling to try to protect their national cultural products, and more importantly, their national identities.

While the authors have presented a very insightful, thorough and significant examination of the increasing homogenization of global culture, their analysis is lacking in some respects. The authors examine all the main pop culture industries, including film, broadcast, music and book publishing, and yet, as is all too typical, the majority of their analysis concerns the film and broadcast industries because, as they argue, these two industries have the most at stake and are therefore in the riskiest position. I believe, however, that the trans-national music industry's role in perpetuating the dominance of global culture by a few media corporations warrants a more thorough and in-depth analysis than Grant and Wood provide.

Building on the framework provided by *Blockbusters and Trade Wars*, I will explore the structures and functioning of the trans-national music industry, the effects of these corporations on independent music, and the various tools that can be used to impede their dominance. I will examine how the unique economic attributes of cultural products differentiate them from other commodities and require that they be treated differently and protected, and I will examine the policy tools that can help to protect them. I will also look at the impact of technology on the efforts to protect culture, and on the dominance of trans-national media corporations.

Cultural Economics

In discussing the economics of culture, one must begin by examining why cultural products are such a unique kind of commodity, and how their particular

economic structure has allowed global culture to be dominated by a handful of corporations.

For many varied and somewhat complicated reasons, cultural products are not like any other products in the market place. Points of differentiation include both the nature of the product and the nature of its consumption. Cultural products communicate ideas; they are not utilitarian. They are experienced, and their creators, more often than not, create for the sake of creation and not necessarily for profit. There is therefore a greater supply of cultural products than there is demand. As a result, cultural commodities can endlessly be conveyed at marginal cost and, by nature, they are "non-rival" goods: many people can enjoy the same product at the same time, and it can be enjoyed repeatedly. The nature of the production process and the marginal cost of producing additional units also functions to differentiate cultural products. (Grant & Wood, pp. 46 - 48). With music, as with other cultural products, the bulk of production costs go into producing the initial master, including studio costs and fees for producers, engineers and musicians. The cost of duplication is minimal: CD duplication costs amount to just under $2 per unit, and in the case of digital distribution, duplication costs are next to nothing.

The predictability of demand, or, what is more commonly referred to as the "nobody knows" rule applies: as culture is an experience, the consumer can only decide whether or not she or he has enjoyed a product as it is being experienced. This makes predicting the success of a cultural product virtually impossible. Demand is therefore extremely difficult to predict, and thus a huge risk factor is involved. Another distinct characteristic of cultural products is their "no substitutes" nature. Each product is unique, and this uniqueness is protected by intellectual property law. Thus, each artist or creator effectively holds a monopoly. This accounts for the large gap that exists between very successful artists and "starving" artists. The "uniqueness of a cultural product" is also

further compounded by its cultural specificity, and is reflected economically through market diversity (Grant & Wood, pp. 48 - 50). Another unique characteristic of cultural products is their short economic shelf life compared to other commodities. This "decay time of cultural demand" dictates that the bulk of revenue is generated upon a product's release; revenue then tends to drop sharply as other, newer products compete for attention. This is where the role of the gatekeeper comes into play. While it is commonly assumed that it is the market, or more so, the consumer who chooses which products they want, in reality it is the "gatekeepers," the "chokepoints" and "taste makers" who ultimately determine which cultural products are produced and which ones get shelved. Decisions are often determined by which products they think will have the greatest initial impact, in terms of revenue; they decide on behalf of the consumers which products are produced and which ones are not. (Grant & Wood, p. 50)

In the music industry, these gatekeepers have traditionally included record label A&R (Artist and Repertoire) executives, radio stations, music video channels, distributors and retail outlets. In the new digital era, the "gatekeepers" still include these traditional players as they continue to control which artists are signed, which artists get preferential treatment at retail – both traditional brick and mortar outlets and new digital sources – which artists are played on the radio and whose video is played on the few remaining video stations that actually still play music videos. However, a new crop of digital gatekeepers have emerged.

With a new focus on "breaking artists" through placement in film and popular television shows, Hollywood music supervisors have come to represent very important gatekeepers. In the digital realm, this is also the case with tastemakers in diverse areas like underground music blogs and web sites like Pitchfork.com. While one might conclude that these new "gatekeepers" are creating opportunities for new, independent artists, ultimately, the question of what is valued as a cultural commodity has more to do

with what demographic advertisers are targeting and therefore what content should be produced or cultivated to satisfy this demographic. The kind of music being promoted through these channels, therefore, is secondary to its potential popularity in the largest possible market. In other words, it is a case of profit margin vs. audience size. (Grant & Wood, p. 355)

One of the most important elements in determining the unique economic nature of cultural products is pricing. Pop culture is the only commodity in which pricing is determined by the producers of the product, (Grant & Wood, p. 51) and is, as a result, also completely arbitrary. This is possible due to the unique economic attributes associated with pop culture products. Because the majority of investment in the cultural product is made during the creation of the master, the latitude for price discrimination is great. Prices can be set differently for different markets, independent of the costs incurred, and are usually based on the "going rate" of the product, which far exceeds the marginal cost of each unit in an attempt to even out the risks involved in the "nobody knows" game. (Grant & Wood, pp. 51 - 55)

In the end, a return is made on the initial investment not by price, but rather by volume sales. The more markets and buyers are differentiated, the more price discrimination occurs and, the more profit is made — this applies even more so now in a world that must straddle terrestrial and digital sales of a product. This is where intellectual property plays a central and growing role: through copyright ownership, the creators or producers determine in which markets they want to sell their products and at what price. As the initial investment has already been incurred in the creation of the master, whatever additional revenue generated after these costs have been recouped, is profit.

As touched on in the previous chapter, the trans-national music industry has long been criticized for the practice of price fixing. Many music fans who partook and continue

to partake in illegal online file sharing cite this long-standing gouging by the Big Four record companies as justification for their "illegal" activities. This "piracy" affects the labels in some of the most important profit-generating areas. Due to the "borderless" nature of the internet, the labels cannot, as yet, enforce any kind of effective copyright protection for their property nor, as a result, can they profit from the different geographically and arbitrarily set price points. This is therefore one of the main factors to which they have attributed the decline and predicted fall of the global music industry. While the emergence of online legal digital sales sites like iTunes and eMusic have somewhat quelled incidents of digital piracy, it is still a serious issue for the multinational music industry. It is one of the primary reasons for the fierce fight mounted by the record labels against the practice of peer-to-peer file trading, particularly exemplified in the infamous lawsuit filed against illegal file-trading network Napster.

Grant and Wood attribute both the unique nature of cultural commodities as well as the underlying economic structures that support and circulate these products to their notion of the "curious economics" of the cultural industries. (Grant & Wood, p. 4) As touched on above, the balance of popular cultural products and profitable ones is delicate: the most popular products are not always the most profitable. This is one of the reasons why we are inundated by Hollywood fare. All but the most profitable are eliminated: "Audiences don't decide which television programs to buy and put on the air. Broadcasters do." (Grant & Wood, p. 34)

Hollywood is often cited as the locus for the production of most pop culture. There are clear economic reasons for this, namely, the necessary elements that create "Creative Clusters," a supply of skilled culture workers, a supply of talented A-list stars and available financing. (Grant & Wood, p. 27) Creative Clusters in the trans-national music industry consist primarily of sites like Los Angeles and New York in North America and, to a lesser extent, London, Paris and Tokyo, internationally. Other hot spots

emerge from time to time — for example, Seattle during the early 1990s "Grunge" scene explosion, and more recently, the Montreal indie music scene, which will be examined in depth in the next chapter. The reasons for these cities emerging as the "next big scene" are similar to those that justify the existence of Hollywood: a collection of skilled and talented culture workers, in this case, talented, creative and innovative artists and musicians, producers and engineers, a community of clubs, venues, labels, and distributors, and financial incentives such as tax breaks and funding opportunities.

After arguing for the uniqueness of cultural products and the economic structures through which they circulate, Grant and Wood go on to target two key points: Most cultural products fail to achieve cultural success and it is impossible to predict which products will be successes. These attributes play major roles in defining the pop culture industries as "risk/reward" industries, and further highlight the small window of time in which cultural products have to be successful/profitable and that if, and when, a product is successful, it produces a much higher financial reward than any other commodity. Cultural producers have discovered that a higher financial reward can be achieved when the economics of scale are taken into account: cultural products that are attractive to those in a larger market will be much more successful, and earn more than those in smaller markets. Therefore, cultural producers attempt to reduce as much risk as possible by ensuring that the product will appeal to the largest possible market, thus making it much more difficult for artists working in less popular cultural genres to make a living through their art.

Given that cultural production industries operate on a "nobody knows" basis in order to reduce risks, producers try to go with a proven formula, with proven stars, in the hopes of recreating a "hit" and reducing risk. This involves massive production and marketing budgets in order to ensure the most awareness in that tiny window of opportunity afforded any new release, thus maximizing initial profits before the product is

replaced by the next, newest release. It also requires an immense amount of working capital in order to invest in multiple large projects in the hopes that one of these will be successful and earn back the initial investment not only in that project, but also in all of the other products produced.

In the music industry, only one of every seven albums produced is "successful" — read, profitable. Thus, record executives are less likely to take risks with artists who may not be a "sure thing" or who do not have a sound that is popular at that time. Labels also require access to large amounts of working capital which is usually only found in larger corporations, specifically those that generate income from other, more immediate and diversified sources. The prohibitive magnitude of this risk factor, this enormous gamble for great rewards, represents one of the primary entrance barriers for smaller independent artists and producers.

Considering these curious economics of cultural products, it becomes increasingly apparent why there is less and less diversity in global cultural products, and how it has become increasingly difficult for independent creators to compete for market share with the big producers. There are, however, tools that can help counter the economic differences of cultural products and the powers of the big players, in order to cultivate space for independent thought, art and culture.

The Cultural Tool Kit

Grant and Wood suggest that with the implementation of a variety of cultural policy "tools," the dominance of the production of cultural products by a handful of multinationals can be undermined. All of the tools listed in the kit have been implemented by the Canadian federal government and form part of Canada's cultural policy. These tools have not only allowed for the protection and maintenance of Canadian cultural sovereignty and identity but also, more importantly, for the creation,

distribution and consumption of independent thought and art. The tools listed in the Cultural Took Kit are: Content Quotas, Subsidies, Expenditure Requirements, Public Radio, Competition Policy and Domestic Ownership Regulation. (Please see Appendix C – Cultural Policy Tool Kit Matrix)

While Grant and Wood list a total of six cultural policy tools they deem crucial to the protection, maintenance and growth of a sovereign nation's culture, specifically, Canadian culture, some of these cultural policies more directly affect the independent Canadian music industry than others. Content Regulation and Subsidies are key policies and ones which are directly related to the birth, health and growth of the independent Canadian music industry, as are the regulations surrounding Expenditure Requirements and the role played by the Public Broadcaster. Competition Policy and Domestic Ownership regulation policies are more specifically applied to the gatekeepers of culture and music — to those broadcasters and distributors who distribute and promote cultural products. While regulations surrounding the distribution and promotion of Canadian cultural products obviously have an effect on and generate important implications for the overall health and growth of the independent Canadian music industry, they do not necessarily have any direct correlations.

Canada's Competition Policy is that which regulates competition, through the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission), of various telecommunication corporations operating in Canada. This traditionally applied to broadcast corporations. However, in the age of mega-mergers, horizontal convergence and vertical integration, this now applies not only to broadcast, but also includes the mega-corporations operating in all areas of media and communications including television, radio, publishing, telecommunications, media distribution, etc. Competition policy has been instituted to ensure healthy competition in the cultural market in Canada,

particularly with regards to ensuring access to diverse cultural products promoted and distributed through media channels.

As the Canadian music industry, like the global music industry, is dominated by the Big Four multinational record labels, Canadian Competition Policy does not directly impact the music industry in the sense of regulating competition in the sectors concerned with the production of Canadian music, nor does Canadian Competition Policy obviously have any bearing on the production sector of Canada's independent music industry. However, there are serious implications for the independent Canadian music industry concerning the distribution and promotion of Canadian music products as Competition Policy regulates those companies distributing and promoting, in one form or another, international and Canadian cultural products within Canada.

For reasons that are beyond the scope of this thesis, regulatory decisions made with regards to Competition and Antitrust policy and Canadian media corporations can have a deep effect on the distribution and promotion of Canadian cultural products. This includes music, in the unfortunate but all-too-familiar situations whereby the cultural products produced by companies owned by larger corporations (who also control other sectors such as publishing and telecommunications through subsidiaries), prioritize and promote their cultural products over those created by competing companies; essentially cutting out from their production, distribution and marketing processes, any other independent or distinct voices. This results in the domination of the market by those very few controlling corporations; precisely the situation the global music industry currently faces with its domination by the Big Four. As Grant and Wood note: "…neglecting this tool [Competition Policy] can lead to an intensity of vertical integration that can, as in the American network television experience, effectively eliminate what Hollywood's struggling independent creators refer to as 'diversity of creative source.'" (Grant & Wood, p. 414)

Canadian Competition Policies indirectly help maintain and grow the Canadian independent music industry by helping to ensure healthy competition in Canada's media distributors. These policies guarantee that Canadian independent music is represented, distributed and promoted, as equitably as possible, along with music which is produced by the label parent companies which also own the distribution and promotion sectors of the corporation — thereby ensuring some cultural diversity.

Like Canadian Competition Policies, Domestic Ownership regulation helps further ensure that Canadian cultural products are fairly represented, promoted and distributed through all media channels. Again, Domestic Ownership regulation generally applies more directly to those companies and corporations which are distributing and promoting cultural products. However, there are also indirect effects specifically for the independent Canadian music industry. Again, an in-depth analysis of Canadian Domestic Ownership regulations and policies is well beyond the scope of this thesis. That said, I will highlight the general goals for Domestic Ownership regulations and their trickle-down effect on the independent Canadian music industry.

One of the primary goals of Domestic Ownership regulation is to help limit multinational horizontal convergence and vertical integration within a specific territory, thereby helping to ensure some diversity in the cultural products that are created and distributed. Indirectly, this policy encourages re-investment in the local cultural community as well as the promotion of local culture. Again, as noted by Grant and Wood "In broadcasting [...] regulation is more likely to succeed in spirit, as well as in form, with domestic [rather] than with alien properties." (Grant & Wood, p. 414) The independent Canadian music industry thus obviously benefits from Domestic Ownership policy as this regulation helps to foster interest, investment and promotion of local music culture — all key to ensuring cultural diversity.

The role of the Public Broadcaster is to "inform, educate, entertain and advance social equity" (Grant & Wood, p. 413) as well as to provide a society with cultural, educational and informational content that reflects those living in that society. The Public Broadcaster acts "as an independent voice from the vested interests of private business and government." (Grant & Wood p.413). In Canada, the public broadcaster is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) its French-Canadian equivalent, Societé Radio Canada (SRC). The CBC operates a national television channel, an all-news cable channel, CBC Newsworld, and two radio channels, as well as third satellite radio and internet-only radio channel. The CBC offers a uniquely Canadian perspective on international events, covers national and local events, all the while promoting locally and nationally produced culture and art.

Though funded by the Canadian government through taxpayer dollars, the CBC is an independent body from the government and its mandate is to remain non-partial. The CBC is also mandated to remain independent of commercial interests. However, as with some other public broadcasters, CBC television is also partially subsidized by commercial advertising whereas both CBC radio channels, and the CBC satellite/internet-radio only channel, are supported solely by the government. (Grant & Wood, p. 173) As Grant and Wood demonstrate, "sufficiently, well-funded public service broadcasters are able to invest in distinctive programs and ultimately retain their audiences against private competitors. Public Broadcasting may be the most universally employed tool in the cultural policy kit." (Grant & Wood, p. 413)

CBC radio has always and continues to be a strong supporter of not only Canadian culture, but also specifically of Canadian independent music, with shows like Q, hosted by former independent Canadian musician Jian Ghomeshi and Stewart McLean's The Vinyl Café. Mr. McLean's stated goal is to support independent Canadian

musicians the way Peter Gzowski supported Canadian writers, by having guest performers on the show and promoting Canadian independent music.

The most significant aspect of Canada's Public Broadcaster, with respect to the independent Canadian music industry, is CBC Radio 3. CBC Radio 3 started out as three separate radio shows, whose mission was to profile independent Canadian music, airing on both CBC Radio One and Two in the early 1990s: *Brave New Waves*, *Nightlines* and *Realtime*, with respective hosts Brent Bambury, David Wisdom, and Leora Kornfeld. *Nightlines* and *Realtime* were eventually merged into one show called *RadioSonic*. In 2000, Grant Lawrence took over hosting duties and later that year, the show morphed into CBC Radio 3. This was a combined effort between CBC Radio and experimental Canadian independent music-focused web sites formerly known as *120 Seconds*, *New Music Canada* and *Just Concerts*. In June 2005, CBC Radio 3 launched weekly podcasts that have proven to be extremely popular and successful: they have been ranked as the most downloaded Canadian podcast on the internet, with an estimated 125 000 weekly listeners in 2006 (CBC Radio 3 web site) and one of the top podcasts worldwide, with over 3.8 million downloads since June 2005. (CBC Radio 3 web site) That same year, CBC Radio 3 launched as its own channel on Sirius Satellite Radio.

The impact of CBC Radio 3 on the development and, more importantly, the export of independent Canadian music, is immeasurable. Aside from providing a number of channels for Canadian independent music to be discovered by Canadians, its global reach through its innovative internet site, podcasts and satellite radio channel has played an extensive role in raising the domestic and international profile of independent Canadian artists. This can be credited, to a certain extent, with helping to generate the recent intense international attention Canadian independent artists have received over the last decade, which I will discuss in further detail in the next chapter.

Expenditure Requirements also play a crucial role in growing and securing the future of independent Canadian music. As dictated by the CRTC and contingent upon license maintenance and renewal, Canadian radio broadcasters are required to annually contribute a certain percentage of advertising revenue to funding programs which support emerging, independent Canadian music artists. Members of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB), the lobby group representing private Canadian broadcasters, annually contribute private funds to a variety of federal funding programs that support independent Canadian artists. These include organizations such as FACTOR (the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings) and its French language sister organization, Musicaction; the federal organizations supporting the independent Canadian music industry; and an initiative called the Radio Starmaker Fund, funded entirely by the CAB to "make a substantial and discernable difference to the careers of Canadian artists by providing substantial incremental investment where the artist has established a proven track record and his or her label is making a significant investment in their future career." (Radio Starmaker Fund web site)

Independent private television broadcasters have also created funding programs that benefit the Canadian independent music industry. CHUM, Moses Znaimer's parent company that owns MuchMusic (Canada's equivalent to MTV), and sister companies MusiquePlus, MuchMoreMusic and MusiMax, has created a variety of funding programs. These include VideoFACT, PromoFACT and MaxFACT, which assist artists with the costs of producing promotional materials, specifically music videos that subsequently air on Znaimer's video channels, accounting for much of his required 35% Canadian content. The CRTC required this practice, through Expenditure Requirements, in exchange for allowing CHUM to create and control additional music-related broadcast licenses.

These Expenditure Requirements, combined with subsidies coming directly from the Federal government, through initiatives like the Sound Recording Development Program (now the Canada Music Fund) managed by the Canadian Heritage Department and administered by not-for-profit cultural organizations such as FACTOR, the Canada Council for the Arts, SOCAN (the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada) and Telefilm Canada, represent the majority of crucial funding for the independent music industry and artists.

Subsidies, perhaps one of the most important of the policies in Grant and Wood's Cultural Tool Kit, are to a great extent what allows for the continued growth and development of the Canadian independent music industry. As discussed above, many of the other tools in the kit are related to and work in tandem with federal cultural funding programs. Despite the argument put forth by Grant and Wood that the music industry is not one of the riskier cultural industries, due to issues such as Economies of Scale, it is still the reality that without federal funding programs, very few independent Canadian albums would be released.

Federal funding subsidies provide funding in the form of grants and loans to both the Canadian independent music industry and individual, independent Canadian artists. Funding is offered for the recording, marketing and promotion of albums; domestic and international touring and showcasing expenses; music video production; a range of domestic and international business development programs; and a variety of collective initiative support programs. These funding programs, therefore, aid in the overall production, distribution, marketing and promotion of independent Canadian music, both domestically and internationally, without which, there would be no Canadian independent music industry. As Gary Jansz suggests, cultural funding is crucial for the survival of independent music:

I think in the new economy of recorded music, it's definitely important to have arts funding and support for artists to record, tour, and make music videos if need be. The sole function for majors is to provide a support system of money to bands and artists and that's where indies historically have had the most notable lack of resource. With that in mind, having governmental policies to support independent music becomes crucial. (Personal conversation, March 6, 2009)

Content Quotas have played a pivotal role in the very creation of the independent Canadian music industry. All licensed Canadian broadcasters (both television and radio), have a commitment as outlined by the CRTC, to air a minimum percentage of Canadian content: currently 35%. (Grant & Wood, p. 200) Canadian content, in the music industry, is determined by the "MAPL" system: the Music must be written by a Canadian, the Artist must be Canadian, the Production must be Canadian and the Lyrics must be written by a Canadian. A release must be at least 50% MAPL in order to qualify as Canadian.

While many in favour of market liberalization have argued that policies such as content quotas are indicators of a totalitarian state and are a threat to free speech, Grant and Wood rightly argue that this type of policy does not dictate *what* kind of content must be aired, simply that the content must qualify as Canadian. Historically, this has been the most important policy tool for the independent Canadian music industry, as it was one of the primary ways in which Canadians were exposed to the music that was being created in Canada. However, Canadian content regulation has long acted as one of the key areas of tension between the independent Canadian music industry and radio broadcasters.

As discussed throughout *Blockbusters and Trade Wars*, based on the current structure of the global music industry and the complicated "distinct" economics surrounding cultural products, broadcasters would much prefer to play the "safe," popular, mainly American music, than to take chances with their advertisers by airing new, unknown music that may not resonate with their audiences.

There are also other tensions with regards to Canadian Content Regulation: while broadcasters must adhere to 35% of Canadian content aired on their stations, there are, as of yet, no stipulations as to whether this content, or even a portion thereof, must be by emerging, independent musicians. As a result, most "Canadian content" aired on Canadian radio consists of superstar Canadian artists like Shania Twain and Celine Dion, signed to multinational record labels, as they qualify as Canadian artists via the "MAPL" system. Their material is aired in favour of un-known, independent Canadian artists or independent artists signed to independent Canadian labels. There is, however, a movement now led by CIRAA (Canadian Independent Recording Artists' Association) to petition the CRTC to amend the Canadian Content legislation to include, within the 35% minimum Canadian content requirement, an additional provision of a 33.3% daytime quota and a 50% evening quota for emerging artists. (CIRAA web site)

As we have seen, the role played by these cultural policy tools to support and maintain Canadian culture, are crucial. I therefore fully agree with Grant and Wood's argument that all (or a combination) of these cultural policies are essential in order to continue creating and maintaining space for independent artists, and for the independent music industry to continue creating, producing, distributing and generally keeping independent music alive and well. However, other means through which independent voices can be heard have begun to emerge. While these new technologies have been causing widespread panic in the trans-national music industry, as argued in the previous chapter, these technologies have generally been a boon to the independent music industry. In that case, what is the current role of the cultural policies in Grant and Wood's Cultural Tool Kit? Are these policies still relevant for independent artists?

The Next Challenge: New Technology

Many hailed the emergence of new "borderless" technologies such as satellite broadcasting and the internet in the latter part of the 20th century as offering more diversity in choice of cultural products. In particular, the internet seemed to foster a sense of democratic access to and participation in the distribution of cultural products. However, due to the rapid commodification of the internet and the advertising-dependent nature of satellite radio, others, including proponents of cultural protectionism and policy, began to fear these new technologies insofar as their borderless properties rendered them difficult to regulate. As Grant and Wood argue, this was not necessarily the case. As with the majority of their arguments, the authors advise the reader to "follow the money" in order to understand why satellite technology and the internet have not brought about the mass destruction of national cultures that once was feared; after all, "financial interest trumps technology." (Grant & Wood, p. 331)

The authors argue that the world's powerful trans-national entertainment corporations rely heavily on the revenue generated through the holding and exercising of intellectual property rights. As both the foreign trade windows of cultural trade and intellectual property rights are dependent on geography, so too is the regulation of satellite technology and the internet. The government therefore does not have to attempt to apply and exercise a form of regulation; the financial self-interest of multinational media corporations supports government-initiated policy regulation of supposedly "borderless" technologies as well as supporting national legal jurisdiction over these technologies.

While this statement holds true for satellite technology, the same cannot be said for the internet, where the majority of the headaches for the trans-national music industry now lie. As Grant and Wood point out, copyright holders won the initial battle with the successful shutting down of Napster, the first illegal, online peer-to-peer music file

trading system, yet, as the authors put it, "technology may yet have the last laugh." (Grant & Wood, p. 347)

For every Napster, there are ten other similar file-trading networks that have yet to be shut down and for every Digital Rights Management (DRM) tool implemented by the music industry, there is a hacker who is able to hack it. With the continuous onward and upward march of technology and the increase in market penetration of better compression techniques and higher internet connection speeds, the multinationals still have a long, hard battle ahead of them. Even with inroads being made with the success of legal digital music download sites such as iTunes and eMusic, the death knell is being sounded by the global music industry. Given the millions of dollars in loss of sales over the last ten years, much of this is blamed on digital piracy. The current global economic down-turn will surely only further contribute to this downward spiral.

As I have argued, the severe decline in album sales has not, however, affected the independent music industry to the same extent as the major multinational corporations. Ironically, despite the concerns of the global music industry (as we explored in more detail in the previous chapter), the great technological advances of the last two decades have arguably been a boon to the independent music industry by reducing overall access barriers to the production and distribution of music. Smaller independent record labels and independent artists themselves are now able to produce, distribute and market their cultural products to a global audience, without relying on a major record label — truly allowing for alternative and diverse voices to be heard, thanks to the once-idealized democratic nature of the internet.

There are, however, some concerns that have begun to emerge given this new state of the music industry. One major issue with this new reality, as argued by Grant and Wood, is "information overload." Still faced with the inherent over supply vs. demand in the economics of culture, popular culture consumers are still reliant on taste-makers

and gatekeepers to filter through the over-abundance of cultural product offerings. Advertising and promotion, the authors argue, still rule the roost and due to the exorbitant cost, remain tools accessible only to those with the budget and power to wield them. This is a very valid argument. However, standing out in the crowd is proving to be slightly more attainable than perhaps originally thought with new social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, user-generated sites like YouTube, the abundance of music bloggers, web sites like Pitchfork.com, and the increased role of film and television music supervisors in taste-making for the new century.

The other issues faced not only by the major multi-nationals, but also by the independent music industry and artists, is the necessity for artists to be paid for their cultural products; if they are not properly compensated, "the result is to undermine cultural diversity, not foster it." (Grant & Wood, p. 350) The authors argue that tools such as iTunes offer some hope in that it offers a balance for producers and consumers. However, this is a "pull" not "push" model (unlike broadcasting) and as a result, cannot, as yet, be regulated under cultural policies. In Canada, at least, the CRTC regulates broadcasting only, not the internet. (Grant & Wood, p. 344) This may soon change with the recent launch of the CRTC New Media hearings in February 2009, essentially debating what can be considered "broadcasting" in the age of the internet and whether or not the internet can be regulated. However, Grant and Wood remain optimistic as they state that there is a good chance that the "success of the policy tool kit is likely to carry through to the internet," (Grant & Wood, p. 351) as it has with satellite technology.

While I am not entirely convinced that the policy tool kit can be seamlessly transitioned to the internet, independent artists are finding new ways to generate revenue from their craft. Artists actually fare much better with digital sales of their music rather than with the traditional album sales as the royalty rate for artists on the sale of digital tracks is significantly higher than those for tracks sold via CD. While the Big Four

argue that consumers who are "pirating" tracks are hurting the artists they purport to love, in most cases it is not the artists that are suffering, it is the labels. With the traditional structure of the music industry and traditional recording contracts, the artists see very little money from the sale of albums.

In a standard recording contract, the majority of the money invested by the label into the album is recoupable from the sale of the album. The artist does not start to see any revenue from album sales until their advance, the recording costs, video costs and other marketing and promotional costs have been recouped by the label. This means that an artist would have to sell a ridiculously high volume of albums in order to start to see any return. This is the reason why most artists are not terribly upset by the proliferation of P2P online file trading sites and embrace legal digital distribution outlets like iTunes and eMusic, particularly when we consider that there are significantly reduced costs when manufacturing and distributing a digital album vs. a physical one and, therefore, significantly fewer costs to be recouped by the artist's label. This is also one of the reasons why many household name artists, including David Bowie and Prince, have broken free from their recording contracts and have begun to either solely release digital, online albums or even give them away for free. Radiohead is the most recent example of this.

The group released their seventh album, *In Rainbows*, on their website on October 10th, 2007 as a digital download for which customers could make whatever payment that they wanted, including nothing. The only mention of pricing on the site was "it's up to you." This created unprecedented fervour within the music industry and the general press. 1.2 million downloads were reportedly sold by the day of the release of the tangible album which consisted of a "discbox," including a second disc from the recording sessions, vinyl and CD editions of the album, and a hardcover book of artwork, thus adding considerably more value to the physical version of the album. (Tyrangiel)

It can be argued that the exclusive digital distribution of an album or the giving away of an album for free is a much easier undertaking for well-established artists because these artists have enjoyed extensive, long careers, built on traditional album sales, and have legions of fans around the world. However, many more artists are experiencing success with this model and are thus providing examples of how the free-flow internet model can work — particularly as many independent artists now view recordings more as promotional items rather than the primary product from which revenue can be generated. This shift in mind-set can also help explain the success of social network sites such as MySpace.

Community sites such as MySpace have launched the careers of an ever-growing number of independent artists (Howe, p. 201) including Lily Allen, Sean Kingston, Arctic Monkeys, Hawthorne Heights and My Chemical Romance, who all generated enough attention on the social networking site to garner the attention of major labels. The success of these communities as viral marketing tools for independent artists lies in the grassroots nature of these online communities that work well as marketing tools for independent artists. Bands can sell up to 50 000 albums through the MySpace network alone. (ibid)

As increasing numbers of independent artists come to view recordings as purely promotional expenses, artists are concentrating more of their efforts on the traditional means through which independent artists have generated revenue. This includes touring, as well as other areas in which artists can increasingly generate revenue, including the publishing and licensing of their songs to television shows and movies, and for use in TV and radio advertisements. Both of these revenue generating channels benefit the artist more directly, since artists generally receive a higher percentage of the gross earnings compared to what they would earn from traditional recordings. More and more artists are cutting out the record label middleman entirely and are releasing their

own albums and marketing and promoting them through their web sites and other online portals, as observed by Gary Jansz:

> I think any tool, [...] that puts the ability of dealing the cards back in the hands of artists is only a positive thing. I think additionally what all this has done is proven how utterly irrelevant the major labels are. (Personal conversation, March 6, 2009)

This kind of internet-based grassroots marketing is beginning to prove that the internet is a viable option for independent artists and a tool that can help foster greater cultural diversity.

Given these reduced entry barriers, the question posed at the beginning of this chapter remains: How relevant are the policies in Grant and Wood's "Cultural Tool Kit" in this new digital age? Are the specific cultural policies in the tool kit still relevant to helping support and grow the independent Canadian music industry or are they outdated, or worse, irrelevant? Given the significant changes in the global music industry over the last twenty years, precipitated primarily by great technological advancements, one would think that this has greatly altered and perhaps even outdated traditional cultural policies. Time will be the only way to tell, but early indications suggest that these cultural policy tools continue to be crucial to the survival and growth of Canadian independent music. In order for the Canadian cultural policies to serve the needs of the ever-changing independent Canadian music industry and artists, I would argue that perhaps they simply need to be modified.

All six of the cultural policy tools that Grant and Wood propose, still play vital roles in helping to support the independent Canadian music industry, even in the digital age. While Domestic Ownership and Competition Policy are policies that continue to remain at arms length from the Canadian independent music industry, they still help to ensure that Canadian music is heard by Canadians, in that local music scenes are

supported by local broadcasters and the broadcast channels through which music is distributed, remain competitive.

It will be interesting to see the outcomes of the CRTC New Media hearings, since they will provide an indication as to whether or not the CRTC will include the internet in its definition of a broadcaster, and whether internet service providers (ISPs) will be required to impose a service levy that can fund independent Canadian content, as argued by many cultural and public interest groups. If the internet does fall under the definition of "broadcaster," we may see a whole new series of cultural policy regulation and can only hope these policies continue to remain beneficial to the independent Canadian music industry and artists and that these new policies do not restrict access to cultural products or information.

While CBC Radio 3 has undeniably helped to increase opportunities for independent Canadian music to be heard throughout the country and across the world, its future in continuing to help promote independent Canadian music is in jeopardy. In the current economic climate, Canada's public broadcaster not only faces constant fears of federal funding cuts, but also the reality of reduced advertising revenue. The Conservative government has currently proposed no plans to "insulate" public broadcasting from this decline, putting their already slim budgets in further peril. (Mayeda) To lose such a strong voice for Canadian independent music now, when, as Grant and Wood argue, we need to provide independent Canadian artists with the tools that will allow them to be heard above the din, would have drastic results on the proliferation of distinct, Canadian voices, domestically and internationally.

Expenditure Requirements and Federal Subsidies have also proven crucial tools in supporting the Canadian independent music industry and artists. However, as the needs of the industry and artists have evolved over the last twenty years, it is important for the allocation of funding to evolve as well. Traditionally, funding programs aiding in

the recording of an album have been one of the highest funded due to the traditional high cost of studio rentals and associated fees. As access to digital recording technology has drastically reduced in price, the federal government, and more specifically the organizations such as FACTOR who administer these programs, need to channel funding away from programs that aid with recording costs, towards funding programs that help with the marketing and promotion of an album and artist. As Grant and Wood have argued, the necessity of marketing and promotion has increased as greater numbers of artists clamour for attention, making standing out in a sea of MySpace pages and YouTube videos a very difficult task indeed and independent artists understand this; as noted by an independent Montreal musician:

> I think the best grants that are the most beneficial to bands are obviously international touring grants as this is essential for a band that has not had a proven track record in other territories. Now more than ever touring has become the one tried and true way to get a band known. Other grants like $20,000 video grants are obviously antiquated and only geared towards [established] artists who don't need the help. (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

This shift has begun: FACTOR has already reduced funds allocated towards recording programs and increased funds being allocated to promotion and marketing initiatives, while also broadening the eligibility criteria for new promotional and marketing initiatives, including touring-related initiatives. As the industry continues to evolve, so too must cultural policy in order to continue to meet the needs of the independent Canadian music industry and artists. With the advent of massive funding cuts to programs like Trade Routes, however, the future of cultural funding itself comes into question.

As we will explore in more detail in the next chapter, the introduction of Canadian Content regulation is arguably one of the main factors that contributed to the birth and growth of the independent Canadian music industry. While I believe that Content Regulation continues to play an important role in the fostering of Canadian music, the

fact that there is no requirement that broadcasters play independent Canadian music as part of the 35% "CanCon" requirement does not necessarily help foster independent Canadian music. This could all change with the outcome of CIRAA's petition to the CRTC to institute minimum requirements for independent Canadian music within existing Canadian Content requirements.

Conclusion

The rapid evolution and expansion of contemporary globalization has, in a very short period of time, put independent cultural expression at risk. The unique "curious economic" nature of cultural products has contributed to the erosion of free, cultural expression. This erosion, however, is already being stemmed: on a national level, through the implementation of all, or a combination of Peter Grant and Chris Wood's tools in their Cultural Policy Tool Kit; and on a local, individual level, through active participation in the creation and distribution of independent cultural products. As I have argued here, this resistance can be seen most clearly and dramatically in the ongoing evolution of the trans-national music industry.

While by many accounts, the industry seems like it is only gaining in power through ongoing and seemingly endless horizontal convergence, vertical integration and mega media mergers, with the aid of digital technologies, individuals are increasingly taking control over the means of production and distribution of independent music. Nowhere is this more exemplified than in the recent international explosion of the Montreal independent music scene, discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE — Overview of the Canadian Independent Music Industry & the Montreal Indie Music Scene from 2004 – 2006.

Introduction

With the recent international success of Canadian independent artists like Feist, Broken Social Scene, Wolf Parade, Stars, The Dears, Sam Roberts and, of course, Arcade Fire, there has been newfound interest in the music coming out of the Great White North. This recent attention peaked in early 2005 with unprecedented international buzz around Montreal's Arcade Fire and their debut album, *Funeral.* With Montreal at the epicentre of this "new scene," reporters from such diverse publications as the *New York Times, Spin, Time* and *Rolling Stone* covered this "explosion" of the Montreal independent music scene, and they all seemed to ask the same question: Why? What had made Montreal, and to an equal degree, Canada, *the* place to make music and find success as an independent band or artist?

Canada's role as a producer of a large volume of cutting-edge independent music may seem like a relatively new phenomenon. However, looking at the history of independent music in Canada, it could be argued that Canada has experienced several waves of internationally successful independent Canadian artists, each wave seemingly building on the success of the previous one. Much of the success of these artists over the last forty years can be attributed to the unique structure of the music industry in Canada. In examining the history of the birth and development of the Canadian independent music industry, as examined in the previous chapter, the central role played by the implementation and expansion of federal cultural policies becomes clear.

From domestic, protective measures such as the implementation of Canadian content regulations to external measures including the establishment of funding programs to aid in the export of Canadian music internationally, these policies have helped create an environment in which independent artists and labels can operate and

survive within an industry that has otherwise been dominated by multinational companies; effectively altering the traditional concentration of power within the global music industry.

As argued in previous chapters, one of the biggest issues currently facing the global music industry has been recent advancements in technology, which have shifted control over the means of production and distribution. In particular, the internet has allowed for the distribution of cultural goods to a global audience. This has completely transformed the idea of the "indie music scene," as music scenes are no longer defined strictly by geography, though, as we will see, geography continues to play an important role in the notion of "scene". The internet has allowed for the creation of virtual music "scenes", ultimately helping to shape and influence other similar geographic and virtual "scenes" throughout the globe. Thus, the combination of these elements have played significant roles in helping to develop, shape, define and allow for the most recent emergence of Canadian music onto the international stage.

This chapter will reveal the importance of Canadian cultural policy, technological developments and the changing notions of scene and community – both geographic and virtual – by focusing on how these factors have contributed to the development of the internationally explosive rise of the Montreal independent music scene from 2004 - 2006. From this case study, I hope to further elucidate how independent music artists, and particularly Canadian ones, have come to dominate international airwaves, clubs, venues and networks over the last ten years.

Research Challenges

Before exploring the history of the independent music industry in Canada in order to shed light on the development of the Montreal independent music scene, some of the challenges faced when attempting such a study need to be examined.

Thus far, there has been a lack of scholarly research published on the complicated relationship between Canadian cultural policy and the Canadian independent music industry, as there has been little written about the history and development of the Canadian music industry in general. This is particularly apparent in comparison to the Canadian film and television industries. This may be attributed to an overall lack of interest in the subject due to an erroneous perception of the music industry's insignificance, but also, as noted by Line Grenier (2001), a particular difficulty in accessing any kind of information or documentation on the Canadian music industry.

As Grenier suggests in her article "In Search of an Archive: Methodological Issues in the Genealogical Analysis of the Popular Music Industry in Quebec," one of the difficulties in writing about the history of music industries, and in her case, the Quebec music industry, is the sheer lack of documentation and data from which to draw. She cites the fact that prior to the mid-1980s, when the majority of federal and provincial cultural policies were introduced, no data or documentation was collected. Grenier also cites the scepticism and suspicion of academics, which she personally encountered when she attempted to conduct interviews with individuals working in the industry, as another barrier to gathering any historical information.

This situation has improved slightly, as we now have over twenty years of government funding data as well as increased attention focused on the independent music industry from a policy and governmental perspective. This has resulted in an increase in both documentation and scholarly writing on the industry, particularly the works of Will Straw, Jody Berland and Line Grenier.

Substantial documentation on the beginnings of the English Canadian music industry only emerged around 1970, as this was when the independent Canadian music industry began to flourish, due in part to newly implemented Canadian Content regulations. It is this information and research, along with some interviews conducted

with various stakeholders in the Canadian independent music industry, that I will be relying on, as well as my own personal experience working in the independent Canadian music industry.

Of the academic work written on the Canadian music industries, the scholarship of Will Straw stands out, as he has been a prolific academic and one of the few writing on Canadian music and the Canadian music industries. One of the most salient of his works is his article "The English Canadian Recording Industry Since 1970." While Straw has covered the history and development of the Canadian sound recording industries found in other sources, including his contribution to *The Music Industry in Volume 3: The United States and Canada* (ed. Koskoff, 2000), this is his most succinct work and will therefore be the primary source for my overview of the development of the independent Canadian music industry.

The Music Industries in Canada from 1878 - 1970

While there is scant information and research concerning the establishment and development of the Canadian music recording industry before the 1970s, Canada's recording industry can be traced back almost as far as the very invention of recording techniques by Thomas Edison in 1877. (Straw & Sanjek, p. 265) Canada was in fact one of the first countries to use sound recording. The first Canadian recordings were made by the Governor General, Lord Dufferin, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, on May 17, 1878. (Encyclopedia of Music in Canada) The first commercial recordings to feature Canadian talent were released in 1900 by the E. Berliner Company in Montreal, a subsidiary of the Emile Berliner Company, the forerunner of RCA Victor (ibid)

Since its fledgling beginnings, the Canadian music industry has been, and continues to be dominated by foreign-owned companies, primarily those based in the US. Even before the turn of the last century, the three major American recording

companies of the time controlled the majority of the Canadian market by importing foreign-produced music through already established Canadian subsidiaries: Edison, Columbia, and Berliner (later, Victor). (Garofalo, p.326)

Without strong national film or broadcasting industries (prior to the establishment of the Canadian Broadcasting Company in 1936) Canada was also deprived of some of the primary channels through which to distribute Canadian music and launch the careers of Canadian artists. As a result, most Canadian artists moved to the US to pursue their careers. (Straw & Sanjek, p. 265)

Unlike other cultural products, such as film or broadcast media, music is created and evolves organically, and therefore does not require a formalized network or structure to exist and flourish, particularly within artistic communities. (Straw, 1993) This is one of the primary reasons why we see a general lack of information and research on the Canadian music industry before the 1970s. Unlike the Canadian film and broadcast industries, before 1970 the Canadian music industry was lacking in institutional continuity, and therefore no formal Canadian structure existed. (ibid) This is also why the scant information about the Canadian music industry that does exist can be found solely though the study and analysis of these other industries. Much of the fragmentation and underdevelopment of the music industry prior to the 1970s, Straw argues, can also be attributed to Canada's unique position as a large geographic mass with a small market, resulting in low levels of geographic and corporate concentration.

Despite these challenges, a small number of independent Canadian music companies did emerge, and were able to survive within the traditional structure of the global music industry. This is similar to the situation examined in the first chapter, in which independent American companies have little choice but to operate within the structures created and maintained by the multinational music industry. The first independent Canadian record companies focused exclusively on licensing foreign music

from major multinationals, pressing and distributing these works in Canada as operationally, it was easier for the foreign multinationals to distribute music through Canadian companies already established in the territory as import duties on product entering the country were prohibitive. (ibid) Canadian record companies were not investing in some of the primary activities for which we have come to know record companies; namely, artist development.

At that time, artist development was primarily handled by the foreign multi-nationals. This is not to say that Canadian music was not being recorded and distributed. A handful of Canadian national and international pop sensations emerged between the 1930s and 1960s, including Guy Lombardo, Percy Faith, Hank Snow, The Four Lads, The Crew Cuts, The Diamonds and Paul Anka, but these artists were not developed in Canada. (Encyclopedia of Music in Canada) As with other cultural industries, in order to attain any kind of success, Canadian talent had to move elsewhere in order to pursue their careers. This all started to change in the 1960s.

One of the first true "explosions" of Canadian talent on both domestic and international levels, occurred in the 1960s with the international successes of artists like Ronnie Hawkins, Robbie Robertson of The Band, John Kay of Steppenwolf, David Clayton Thomas of Blood, Sweat and Tears, and Andy Kim. (Encyclopedia of Music in Canada) One of the reasons for this unprecedented success was the unique structure of the music industry in Canada.

The late 1960s started to see independent Canadian companies sign contracts with and release albums by independent Canadian artists. One of the biggest successes of that era was The Guess Who. Seeing not only the domestic but international success enjoyed by these fledgling artists and companies, the multinationals started to set up satellite offices in Canada to foster, develop and export local talent. With a solid foothold

in Canada, the local branches of the multinationals began to take over the national distribution of not only their own products, but also those of the independents. Up until that point, the indies handled the manufacturing and distribution of all products in Canada; major label and independent. Distribution became increasingly important in order to establish an extensive cross-Canada network to maximize market opportunities and, therefore, profits. The majors were the only ones in a position to establish and implement such a distribution network.

Some independent Canadian companies, like Quality Records, retained their pressing plants and continued to function as pressing houses, but many were bought out by the major multinationals, attempting to gain control over the entire process of developing, manufacturing and distributing both foreign and Canadian music in Canada. This signalled the beginnings of vertical integration practices among the multinationals, and the creation of monopolies. (Straw, 1993) These practices were replicated throughout the world, including in the US, and rendered most independent operators insignificant. Many went out of business while a few continued to manufacture compilation albums that were licensed from the majors and distributed domestically through their established distribution network. (ibid)

With fewer licensing opportunities, and the loss of control over music distribution in Canada, it became increasingly difficult for independent Canadian record companies to carve out a market for themselves. However, realizing the richness of Canadian musical talent and witnessing the potential for domestic and international success for this talent, a few existing companies as well as some new companies, decided to abandon the practice of manufacturing albums, and get into the artist development game. As the majors had essentially taken over the distribution business in Canada, these new record labels had to sign distribution agreements with the majors in order to

distribute their product nationally. These fledgling independent Canadian record companies still had an uphill battle to fight in order to carve out an existence for independent Canadian music, in the shadow of the dominant multinationals in Canada.

In their frustration with the lack of opportunities for English Canadian musical performers given the existing American-led trans-national dominance of the Canadian music industry, independent record companies, as well as performers and cultural critics, started to exert pressure on the federal government to devise means to protect and support the emerging national recording industry. (Straw & Sanjek, p. 265) The Canadian government stepped up and began to implement the first in a series of cultural policy legislation specifically targeting and supporting Canadian music as well as the nascent Canadian independent music industry. The significant effect of the implementation of this initially protectionist Canadian cultural policy on the development and growth of the independent Canadian music industry is undeniable.

A New Era: The Establishment of the Independent Canadian Music Industry

1970 saw the adoption and implementation of Canadian Content regulations by the CRTC, stipulating that Canadian radio stations must broadcast 30% Canadian music. This was a real turning point for the music industry. As Straw notes:

> This protectionist measure, whose success is widely acknowledged,
> was not, nevertheless, the only cause of important changes in the
> Canadian recording industries during the 1970s. Throughout this
> period, in addition, the organizational form of Canadian recording
> firms, and the nature of their links to the trans-national music
> industries, would undergo major transformations. (1993)

It has been argued that this "reflected the [ongoing] tension between independent Canadian record labels, who were trying to make a go of it promoting Canadian artists, and Canadian radio stations, who found it far more profitable to broadcast US pop." (Garofalo, p. 329)

A new and different organizational structure began to emerge in the early 1970s. There was finally governmental support for Canadian music through tangible legislation such as the introduction of Canadian Content minimums, and consequently, a new crop of independent Canadian record labels began to emerge. Some of the first of these labels included Aquarius Records, home to multi-platinum selling artists April Wine, which was established in 1968, and True North Records, home to legendary artists Bruce Cockburn and Murray McLauchlan, which was established in 1970. (Straw, 1993) These new companies and the artists they signed began to generate journalistic interest, and the careers of these emerging independent Canadian artists began to take off. Many of these new independent labels were formed by individuals who were working in other areas of the music industry, such as Aquarius Records' founding partners, Canadian impresarios Donald K. Donald (Donald Tarlton) and Terry Flood, and True North's founder, artist manager Bernie Finkelstein. This proved to be beneficial, as these founders already had a deep understanding of other, related sectors of the industry and how the different sectors of the industry worked together.

As well as partnering with the major multinational labels for distribution, the new crop of independent labels began to enter into a "farm team" arrangement with the major labels, as had many of their equivalents in the US. While these arrangements worked for the most part, in 1975 the new crop of independent labels decided to form CIRPA (Canadian Independent Record Production Association). They also started to develop a roster of successful independent stars, both within Canada and internationally, and were able to remain rather stable, due in part to the number of labels producing successful rock acts, including BTO, Lighthouse, the Five Man Electrical Band, Mahogany Rush, Trooper, Rush, Max Webster, Chilliwack and Triumph. Canada began to establish its own "distinct history with distinct stars." (ibid)

These new independent record labels began to experience great success, due in large part to their self-perception as production houses rather than as vertically integrated recording firms involved in manufacturing and distribution, which they left to the multinationals. Instead, they pursued horizontal convergence, setting up integrated publishing wings for their artists and becoming more directly involved in touring. (ibid) This provided the labels with more flexibility because they had little investment in projects, and could therefore change affiliation when it was advantageous.

The end of the 1970s also saw an increased presence of Canadian music industry professionals at international trade shows, such as MIDEM in Cannes, France, known as the premiere international licensing conference. Indie label owners realized that in order to continue to grow, they needed to expand their markets beyond Canada's borders. The small Canadian market could not continue to sustain some of the independent companies, particularly if they were branching out into lesser-known and less popular musical genres. In the late 1980s and 1990s, these efforts to branch out internationally were increasingly supported by the federal government, as federal cultural policy began to move further away from its protectionist past and toward an expansionist future.

Canadian Cultural Policy and the Expansion of the Canadian Independent Music Industry

As we have seen, the institution of federal cultural policies has played a crucial role in the development of the Canadian independent music industry. More than anything, some of the key cultural policies found in Grant and Wood's Cultural Policy Tool Kit, examined in the previous chapter, particularly, Content Quotas, Subsidies, Expenditure Requirements and Public Radio, can be credited with aiding the growth of the Canadian independent music industry.

It could be argued that the birth of the Canadian independent music industry came with the institution of Canadian Content regulation in the early 1970s. Aside from helping to establish independent Canadian music labels in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Canadian government began to institute other policies throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s that greatly helped to nurture this burgeoning industry.

As a reaction to declining worldwide record sales in the early 1980s, the federal government increased funding to the Canadian music industries throughout the decade. This resulted in the establishment of the Sound Recording Development Program (SRDP, now called the Canada Music Fund) in 1986, the first initiative to financially support the Canadian music industry via project-based subsidies for the production, distribution and marketing and promotional support of Canadian independent music. (Canadian Heritage web site: From Creators to Audience) The Canada Music Fund's objective is to "seek to strengthen the Canadian sound recording industry from creator to audience." (ibid) The SRDP looked to organizations, such as FACTOR, and her French sister organization, Musication, to manage and administer the funding.

FACTOR's mandate is to assist in the growth and development of the Canadian independent music industry. (FACTOR web site) FACTOR offers a wide range of programs that provide assistance to artists (songwriters, singers and musicians), including support for sound recordings, domestic and international showcases and tours, video production, marketing and promotion efforts. It also supports the independent Canadian music industry as a whole through a variety of business development initiatives including basic funding for labels, managers and publishers, as well as national and international business development initiatives and funding for a variety of local, regional, national and international events such as conferences, festivals and awards shows. (ibid)

The Canadian independent music industry is heavily dependent on FACTOR for its survival. FACTOR funding can account for up to 75% of the total eligible budget for sound recording, video production, marketing and promotion initiatives, showcases and tour applications for eligible independent artists and labels. (ibid) Without this financial support, not only would these companies not survive, but neither would the numerous other related businesses that rely on a healthy sound recording industry.

The creation of MuchMusic, in 1984, and French language sister station MusiquePlus in 1986, provided much needed additional promotional avenues for Canadian independent music, particularly as these stations were also subject to the 30% Canadian content regulations. These stations also helped focus more public attention on the Canadian music industry as a whole, and further stimulated the production and sales of Canadian music. (Straw & Sanjek, p. 267) The establishment of CRTC-mandated expenditure requirements for these stations, stipulating that 5% of their annual gross advertising revenues be allocated to the funding of organizations like VideoFACT, also helps to ensure that independent Canadian artists can afford to produce the music videos that air on these channels. (CRTC web site Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2004-15). With their comparatively unrestricted playlists, MuchMusic and MusiquePlus also forced radio to open up their programming to some degree. (Garofalo, p.330)

As discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, CBC, Canada's network of public broadcasting stations, and particularly CBC Radio 3, plays a crucial role in supporting and promoting independent Canadian music both domestically and internationally. With its "digital only" broadcast via the web, satellite radio, and its extremely popular podcasts, CBC Radio 3 brings unique "independent Canadian music only" programming to an extremely broad international audience. CBC Radio 3 has also had a long history of assisting independent Canadian artists by supporting a variety of cross-Canada tours featuring emerging independent Canadian artists, as well as sponsoring stages at

Canadian music conferences such as Toronto's NXNE (North By North East) and international festivals such as SXSW (South By South West) in Austin, Texas. This has further helped to expose independent Canadian artists to national and international audiences. (CBC Radio 3 web site)

There are also other support mechanisms that have emerged over the years, many of which are supported either financially, through federally funded organizations like FACTOR, or more indirectly, through media supporters like the CBC. For instance, support has also come from Canadian music industry trade magazines, including *RPM*, *The Record* and *Canadian Music Network* (all of which are now unfortunately defunct), as well as national and regional awards ceremonies, such as the Junos, the ECMAs (East Coast Music Awards), the WCMAs (West Coast Music Awards), and the Polaris Music Prize. Additional support and exposure for independent Canadian talent comes from domestic and international trade shows such as CMW (Canadian Music Week), NXNE (North By North East), the Halifax Pop Explosion, Pop Montreal, M for Montreal, France's MIDEM, Germany's PopKomm, SXSW (South By South West) in Austin, Texas, CMJ (College Music Journal) in New York, Sonar in Barcelona, Spain, and Winter Music Festival in Miami, Florida.

Clearly, federal cultural policy has played a central role in the development and growth of the Canadian independent music industry. All of these measures have helped to cement a Canadian star system, recognized both domestically and internationally, as noted by Dan Seligman: "In Canada, we're in a pretty good place, compared to the States; there is a structure built up to support artists." (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009) As a result, despite the dominance of multinational record companies, Canada has had a strong history of successful independent artists and labels that continues today, evidenced by the recent explosion of the Montreal indie music scene.

The Montreal Indie Music Scene: 2004 - 2006

It is important to begin any examination involving "scenes" with a few definitions to contextualize the analysis. As indicated in the introduction, the term "indie" has two, often interchangeable, yet significantly different, meanings: the first referring primarily to the "independent" nature of the artists producing music; and the second referring to the "indie" genre of music that has emerged over the last ten years, loosely defining the kind of music generally produced by independent artists and labels (as in "indie rock" or "indie pop"). For the purposes of this discussion, the "Montreal indie music scene" refers primarily to the independent nature of the scene, and not necessarily to the "indie" genre of music produced by some of the members of the scene.

Most music "scenes" have traditionally been defined by the genre and/or location from which they emerged: the Manchester, UK punk and New York Disco scenes in the 1970s, the alternative "college rock" scenes out of Athens, Georgia and Chapel Hill, North Carolina in the 1980s, and the grunge scene out of Seattle, Washington in the early 1990s. The same is true for the Montreal indie music scene of the early 21st century. However, as has been posited through other investigations of independent music scenes, such as Holly Kruse's examination of the American College rock scenes in the 1980s, it becomes apparent that while it was the "outside" perception of a presumed commonality of musical genre that created an international buzz around the Montreal indie music scene in 2005, it was, as I will argue, due to the independent nature of the Montreal indie scene, and not necessarily the erroneous perception of a commonality of the "indie" musical genre coming out of Montreal, that allowed for the international emergence of some independent Montreal-based artists. As observed by Dan Seligman: "People say: "I like indie-rock", but "indie" itself doesn't have an inherent meaning; it shouldn't connote a type of music, a style." (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

Scenes

While the notion and examination of musical scenes is an entire area of study within the study of popular music, as exemplified in the works of Will Straw, Holly Kruse, Andy Bennett and Simon Frith, and is too broad a subject to adequately cover here, it is extremely pertinent to the examination of the Montreal indie music scene. As such, I will touch upon some of the key elements of musical scenes that are endemic to the Montreal scene. Given the problematic nature of the notion of "scene" and its loose definition, particularly within the context of popular music scenes, I will draw upon Will Straw's definition of "scene", from his article "Scenes and Sensibilities:"

> Scene will describe units of highly variable scale and levels of
> abstraction. Scene is used to circumscribe highly local clusters of
> activity and to give unity to practices dispersed throughout the world.
> It functions to designate face-to-face sociability and as a lazy
> synonym for globalized virtual communities of taste. (2002, p. 6)

The Montreal indie music scene is highly variable as it does not simply involve music; yet music is obviously central to the scene. There is, however, more to it: particularly, a specific set of values and belief systems, communicated through the intersections and relationships between geography, economy, culture and society. As argued by Kruse "notions of locality and inter-locality are central to understanding independent pop/rock music's social and economic relations and practices." (p. 3)

One of the key points of definition with regard to any scene is that of geography. As scenes require participants, geography is one of the elements that gathers and centralizes the participants. Traditionally, for music scenes, these are the communal sites of experience, usually bars, music venues, rehearsal spaces or other sites, such as unofficial loft parties. The relationship of these localized venues to economic structures is essential to the survival of the bars, other music venues and points of congregation, which are dependent on those gathering there for their continued existence. This is

where the culture of the scene asserts itself given that culture is the specific draw to these sites: members of a particular scene go to a particular venue to participate in a particular kind of experience (in this case, a musical experience). Such activity is primarily what binds the participants to a particular scene. Societal elements also come into play in a particular music scene. As Pierre Bourdieu argues, these scenes are ruled by the concept of "habitus": essentially, a set of acquired patterns of thought, behaviour and taste. (Kruse, p. 150)

Bourdieu's notion of habitus particularly references the notion of "class" – the patterns of thought, behaviour and taste, based on the internalization of culture or objective social structures through the experience of an individual or group. The habitus then provides a certain skill set to navigate our different fields, like professional life, art, sports, all the while guiding our choices, while being constantly remade by these choices. While Bourdieu applies the concept of "class habitus" to interlocking sites of cultural practice, it is important to expand this ideology beyond class to incorporate generation, gender and ethnicity, in order to "…explain production, consumption, and social practice in indie music scenes…[as they] …help shape indie music contexts." (Kruse, p. 151)

Given these definitions, the Montreal indie music scene can be viewed as the quintessential music scene. The Montreal indie music scene has long been synonymous with the "Mile End" area of Montreal. With a working-class, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural immigrant history, the area arguably bordered by Mont-Royal Ave. to the South, the Canadian Pacific railway line (running parallel to Van Horne Ave.) to the North, Hutchison St. to the West and Saint-Denis St. to the East, with proximity to the vibrant Plateau Mont-Royal area and the city's downtown core, Mile End has traditionally been a vibrant, affordable neighbourhood. The location, effervescence and affordability have attracted artists and out-of-town McGill and Concordia University students to the area.

Given the large artistic and student population, the area is host to many cafés, galleries, workshops and boutiques as well as a substantial number of both traditional and non-traditional music venues that enjoy strong community support.

The industrial past of Mile End also plays a dominant role in the evolution of the Montreal indie music scene: many of the abandoned factory buildings in the area have been transformed into affordable living and rehearsal spaces for the numerous area artists and have provided office spaces for new, creative businesses, such as France-based video game development company Ubisoft. The development of such businesses, in conjunction with the expansion of the local artistic/academic community, have also contributed to the economic stability in the area.

The intermingling of the existing Hasidic, Portuguese, Italian, Greek and Eastern European immigrant communities, with the growing artistic, academic and student influx in the neighbourhood, has also created a linguistically, socially and culturally diverse neighbourhood and, as a result, one that attracts and hosts a diverse population. Among this diversity, however, are some elements of uniformity. Mile End is also known for the distinctive left-leaning, activist and community-oriented kind of politics that not only bind this community, but also attract other like-minded individuals to the area, ultimately strengthening and growing the community.

The high concentration of artists, academics and cultural workers that is therefore attracted to and occupy this specific area in Montreal then generates the "creative clusters," Grant and Wood attribute to "hotspots" of creative/cultural production. (Grant & Wood, p. 27). With the influx of creative and culture workers, specifically musical artists, and the resulting creation of a "scene", these elements also attract the hangers on and hipsters. A "hipster" as defined by Wikipedia is "a slang term [...] that is used to describe young, recently-settled urban middle class adults and older teenagers with interests in non-mainstream fashion and culture, particularly alternative music,

independent rock, independent film, magazines like *Vice*, *Clash* and *Adbusters*, and websites like Pitchfork Media. In some contexts, hipsters are also referred to as *scenesters*. The term is sometimes used in a derogatory manner, referring to someone who moves from trend to trend while claiming to be outside of mainstream culture."

With all of the attention focused on the Montreal indie music scene from 2004 - 2006, Montreal, specifically its Mile End neighborhood, inevitably became a hipster-haven. This influx of youth to the city further helped to support and grow the Montreal indie music scene but could arguably also be responsible for some of the unwanted attention and misrepresentation the scene experienced in the wake of the high profile articles that came out in publications like the *New York Times* and *Spin* magazine. As a result of the hipster invasion, it can be argued that Montreal's reputation as a mecca for hipsters began to outshine the initial reason for all the attention in the first place: the wonderfully diverse and distinctive music that was coming out of Montreal at that time.

The local specificity of the Montreal indie scene, which is so closely associated with the Mile End neighbourhood, corresponds to one of the defining elements of a "scene." However, as I will argue, "scenes" are not necessarily geographically restricted. In compliance with Straw's definition of a scene, the Montreal indie music scene is "used to circumscribe highly local clusters of activity and to give unity to practices dispersed throughout the world" (2002, p.6): participation in this scene can happen in Montreal, yet similar "scenes" happen around the world. More to the point, the music and cultural context in Montreal can be communicated and replicated throughout the globe via "globalized virtual communities of taste," (ibid) thus creating a global, virtual scene that is still very specific and focused. In this sense, the power of modern-day communication cannot be overlooked in the substantial role it plays in scenes in general, and in the Montreal indie music scene specifically.

Without some of the technological advances made in the last twenty years, primarily the internet, but also compressed, digital file formats like MP3s and online file sharing and community sites, the Montreal indie music scene, would not, in many ways, be the same scene as it exists now. This is not to argue that without MP3s and the internet, the Montreal indie music scene would never have developed, as many music scenes developed before the advent of the digital era. In fact, given some of the core elements related to this scene's development, it most certainly would have emerged; but it may simply not have garnered as much international attention in the absence of recent technological innovations. With instant communication dramatically reducing the constraints of both time and space, the rise of the Montreal indie music scene to the international stage happened almost instantaneously. While many members of the Montreal indie music community have maintained, with some justification, that the scene has always existed and always will, the level of attention focused on the scene will ebb and flow.

One of the primary reasons for all the attention focused on the Montreal indie music scene from 2004 - 2006 was the result of the use of the internet by Montreal indie bands to distribute and promote their music. With instant access to millions of potential fans throughout the globe, internet distribution is not only the primary means through which indies distribute their music, but is, in many ways, a key characteristic of "indie" music as defined by the independent nature of the scene. In the case of Arcade Fire, there were no major record labels pushing their first single "Neighborhood #1 (Tunnels)"; it was not being played on commercial radio; MTV was not playing the video; and the album was not on prominent display in retail outlet chains like HMV. The band had a MySpace page and they toured. Instant fans, such as pop icons David Bowie and David Byrne, were certainly helpful in promoting the band, but these legends of pop music discovered Arcade Fire via the online communities and scenes that were abuzz with

adulation for the band. This adulation was exemplified in the 9.7 rating for their debut album on Pitchfork.com. The central role, played by modern technology in the perpetuation and sustenance of indie music scenes and, as a result, indie artists, is therefore undeniable as are the communities/scenes that support them. Dan Seligman observes: "They [Arcade Fire] went from being a hip band, to a huge international sensation. If they were just alone and there wasn't any community around them, they probably wouldn't be where they are now." (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

The Tipping Point: *Spin, The New York Times, Rolling Stone* and *Time*

For the Montreal indie music scene, 2005 was the tipping point. Early that year saw the release of an unprecedented number of articles in such diverse international publications as *The New York Times, Spin, Time* and *Rolling Stone*, all anointing Montreal as the next big music scene. All this attention stemmed primarily from the release and critical acclaim of one album: Arcade Fire's debut, *Funeral*. While Arcade Fire and their album *Funeral* were garnering the lion's share of attention and press, journalists were prompted to investigate why not only this band, but countless other Montreal-based indie bands, were all reaching critical acclaim and international success. Up to this point, Montreal was not regarded as an international music capital and this flood of attention helped put Canadian independent music on the global map.

While journalists flocked to Montreal to discover the secret to the unprecedented success of its local bands (including Sam Roberts, the Unicorns, The Dears, Stars, The Stills, Kid Koala, Chromeo, Besnard Lakes, Wolf Parade and Pony Up!, to name but a few), many other bands were also relocating to Montreal in hopes of absorbing that certain *je ne sais quoi* success of the Montreal indie bands. However, those bands and supporting industries already entrenched and working in the Montreal independent music scene and industry were nonplussed, and in some cases, vehemently annoyed

with all the attention. Many Montreal indie artists and those who work in the indie industry believed that Montreal had always enjoyed a very rich and somewhat successful independent music scene and industry. These cultural workers were wary of the motivation for all the attention, not wanting the music produced in Montreal, to become yet another "scene", co-opted by the mainstream and commodified by the multinational music industry looking to turn a profit on the "next big thing", as observed by an independent Montreal musician: "I think when blatant opportunism and short sighted marketing rears it's head, there will be a backlash from the indie police." (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009) Many were thus asking the question: Why all the attention and why now?

The articles in *Rolling Stone* and the Canadian edition of *Time* failed to garner much attention, aside from the fact that they happened to profile the Montreal indie music scene at the same time as the other major publications, mainly through more concentrated coverage of the skyrocketing success of Arcade Fire. However, the *New York Times* and *Spin* articles generated the most buzz and backlash from the Montreal indie music scene at the time. A brief examination of these articles will help shed some light on the reasons for all the attention and the backlash.

While *Spin* is generally regarded as a well-established authority on slightly more underground artists than its contemporaries (e.g., *Rolling Stone*), by many in the independent, artistic community, it is also viewed as commercial tripe; particularly in contrast with Pitchfork.com, the indie music bible. Given the left-leaning, progressive and community-minded politics of indie music scenes in general, and particularly, those in the Montreal indie music community, it is clear why there was a huge backlash when the *Spin* article anointing Montreal as "the next big thing" was published, particularly as it was profiling and featuring this very community. The general sense regarding the article by Montreal indie artists and industry types alike was, as quoted by indie Montreal

musician and journalist Jonathan Cummins in his column in the weekly *Montreal Mirror* publication: "Once *Spin* says you're cool, it's obviously shit. *Spin* is the worst piece of shit ever. It's an econo men's magazine and their music editorial leads the charge." (qtd. in Dunlevy)

While *Spin* garnered wrath for its pronouncements, the *New York Times* article also drew fire for primarily focusing on the independent Anglophone music scene with scarcely a mention of Montreal independent Francophone music garnering critical acclaim on the international scene with artists like Malajube, Les Breastfeeders and Call Me Poupée. The article also angered members of the Montreal indie music industry insinuating that because Anglophones are the minority in Montreal, Anglophone indie artists are somehow "oppressed." Most members of the indie Anglo Montreal music scene were simply annoyed by all the attention, including members of some of the featured bands, such as The Dears' Murray Lightburn, who commented: "I know Montreal so well. I don't see it the way they're seeing it, like this new big scene. It's always been that way to me. There have always been a bunch of people making music in Montreal." (ibid) Others, such as Pop Montreal Festival Director Dan Seligman appeared to take a more measured approach: "Considering the limitations of the magazine, I think the writer did pick up on some stuff. But people should take it with a grain of salt. Have some fun. It's good for business." (ibid) While still others, like Gary Jansz, were dismissive: "We should see it for what it is: clueless entities trying to report on a scene where they're arguably more adept on writing about something innocuous like Barenaked Ladies or Coldplay." (Personal conversation, March 6, 2009)

Despite the backlash and some inaccuracies in the two articles, they both managed to loosely profile the unique stage set in Montreal that gives birth to, nourishes and fosters a very unique independent music scene. This scene has not only launched

the careers of globally successful musical artists, but has also helped to raise the international profile of Canadian independent artists overall.

History: Setting the Scene

As indicated in both the *New York Times* and *Spin* articles, and as referenced above with specific respect to the Mile End scene, the complex history of Montreal as a city and its political, economic, geographic and cultural development play key roles in how this city has organically created an environment in which independent music artists can be fostered. Settled by the French in the 17th century, Montreal grew to become one of the first great economic powers in the New World. Montreal remained a French colony until it was surrendered to Great Britain in 1763. Ever since, Montreal, as the largest city in the mainly French province of Quebec in the English-dominant country of Canada, has endured and experienced political tensions that have manifested and overflowed into linguistic and cultural tensions and resulting economic tensions. Manifestations of such tensions include a rich history of extremism, passion, fighting and love (Perez) that all contribute to Montreal's hedonistic reputation as one of North America's most infamous "sin cities."

In a strange way, both the Montreal Anglophone and Francophone communities self-identify as the minority and the underdogs: Anglophones, in the context of living in a Francophone majority in the city and in the province; and Francophones, in the larger context of trying to carve out an existence as one of the few Francophone communities and cultures in Canada, and indeed, in the rest of North America. This marginalized and underdog sentiment, for both cultures, plays an undeniable role in helping to shape the overall dynamic culture of Montreal. Each culture has to struggle to survive and, in doing so, creates a very rich cultural chaos that is ripe for the creation of art. This dynamic

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coupled with the French Quebecois obsession with the arts, create the perfect environment for artistic expression. (Perez)

The political climate and resulting economic outcomes have arguably played the most tangible roles in creating an environment in which artistic communities can flourish in Montreal. Political and economic unrest and uncertainty, resulting from the long-term possibility of Quebec separation and two economic recessions of the early 1980s and the early-to-mid-1990s, respectively, led to Montreal's decline as a business centre from the mid-1970s onward. With the outcome of the second referendum in 1995 confirming (if only barely) Quebec's (and Montreal's) place in a unified Canada, confidence in Montreal returned, as did some business. As confidence in the stability of Montreal's economy increased in the late 1990s and early 2000s, lower rents and the overall lower cost of living attracted an influx of artists to the city, paving the way for Montreal's artistic revival. Aside from the low cost of rent, the cost to study and pursue a higher education is also relatively affordable in Montreal, particularly when compared to university tuition in the US, even when considering foreign student fees. This may account for the recent influx of American students moving to Montreal to attend universities such as McGill. (Simmons) Moreover, it is possible to live in Montreal without a car due to the city's "walkability," particularly in the Plateau and Mile End areas, and to the generally efficient and far-reaching public transportation system. While the prospect of earning high salaries was, and still is to a certain extent, unrealistic in Montreal, it has remained one of the most affordable cities in North America – giving young artists the opportunity to dedicate more time to their art.

Montreal's geographic position as the largest city in a relatively vast region (Carr), as well as its geographic proximity to New York, have contributed to its development as a hotbed of artistic creativity. This geography combined with a particularly harsh winter that encourages artists to stay inside and create, and the

seemingly paradoxical hedonistic tendencies of the city, with a particular reputation for underground and "off-grid" parties, have created many opportunities for young, new independent artists to grow and emerge in the scene.

Left-Leaning Politics

Aside from these more tangible elements that, when combined, result in an enhanced environment for creative expression, a number of intangible elements have been identified as key factors in creating the Montreal indie music scene. As discussed above, the prominence of socialist-leaning and vaguely communitarian politics (Perez) in Montreal, particularly in Montreal's artistic communities and neighbourhoods (specifically the Plateau Mont-Royal and Mile End areas) have played key roles in the emergence of the Montreal indie music scene.

Montreal, and Quebec in general, have a strong history of traditionally left-leaning, socialist influence in political and social life. While Quebecers are the highest taxed citizens in North America, they also enjoy unprecedented social services, even within Canada, in the areas of education, health care and child care. In line with its somewhat socialist-leaning social policies, Quebec has traditionally been, and still is, a strong supporter of culture and the arts as evidenced by its long history of provincial government support and encouragement of artistic pursuits. The global acclaim of Quebec's artistic cultural products, such as the internationally renowned Cirque du Soleil, further exemplifies the success of Quebec's cultural funding programs and explains the reasons for its citizens' massive protests when these programs are threatened. Not only was Quebec host to some of the loudest protests in the Fall of 2008 when Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government cut $45 million of cultural funding from the federal budget, but it has been argued that it was this dissatisfaction with the party's decision to make these cuts that resulted in the

significantly lower standing in Quebec by the Conservative party in the December 2008 federal election; ultimately resulting in the continuation of a Conservative-lead minority federal government. (Leblanc)

These left-leaning politics have also influenced the history of Quebec popular music. Many of the genres that have thrived in the Quebec counter-culture have been the more politically-minded and reactionary varieties of Folk and Punk, with a strong current of DIY (Do it Yourself) attitude running through it all. Most Montreal musicians care less about economic success than creating and performing music for the sheer pleasure of it. As Howard Bilerman, one-time Arcade Fire drummer and co-owner of the prominent indie recording studio Hotel2Tango, stated: "History has shown that if you don't participate in the big music industry, you will have a much longer musical career." (qtd. in Carr) The opposite is also true vis-à-vis long-lived local careers as exemplified by the backlash against bands like The Stills, who lost much credibility when they moved to New York, toured with industry darlings, The Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs, and attained US album sales of over 83 000 units. (Blue & Porter) In many indie Montreal minds, The Stills' behaviour was not only seen as "selling out," but also as abandonment. Such abandonment contravenes one of the most important values held by hard-core indie Montreal artists: the notion that in order to be a part of a community, you must give back to that community. This fundamental value is, after all, what continues to feed and enrich a particular scene. This value is in part, what helped to re-establish the Montreal indie scene after the devastation of the last recession in the mid-1990s. Arguably, the prominence and health of the Montreal indie music scene would not now, or ever exist, without the contributions made to the scene by prominent indie Montreal post-rock ensemble Godspeed You! Black Emperor.

Godspeed You! Black Emperor

Godspeed You! Black Emperor (or GYBE) was formed in Montreal in 1994. Their distinctive, experimental post-rock sound is marked by elaborate orchestral arrangements and an overall brooding sound. The band released three studio albums from 1997 to 2002, and consistently toured Europe and North America, building up an extensive, solid and dedicated fan base resulting in album sales of over 70 000 units in the US alone (Blue & Porter) Arguably, GYBE was the first group to put the Montreal indie music scene on the international music map. While GYBE has experienced extraordinary success for an indie band, the key, they have argued, lay in keeping their goals realistic, remaining true to their ideals and not compromising their values. Unlike most other musicians, indie or not, GYBE members decided that instead of investing their modest, yet substantial earnings in mutual funds, they would invest them in the Montreal indie music community at a time when the community needed it most.

GYBE member Mauro Pezzente and his wife, Kiva Stimac, invested in real estate in the Mile End area of Montreal and opened a vegetarian restaurant/concert venue called Casa del Popolo (literally, House of the People) in 2000. A year later, across the street, they opened Sala Rossa, a former concert hall that is part of a Spanish Social club. At the time, Montreal was coming out of a long recession that deeply affected the indie music scene. Effects on the scene included the closing of numerous small and mid-sized clubs and venues and a rise of "pay to play" clubs and bars. The recession of the 1990s left very few venues, in which Montreal indie bands could play. As such, the opening of these two venues breathed new life into the Montreal indie scene and signalled a resurgence in live indie music in the city. It also began to help re-establish the indie music structure in the city.

In addition to the opening of Casa del Popolo and Sala Rossa, other members of GYBE reinvested their time and money in the Montreal indie music scene. Founded in

1995 by GYBE members Efrim Menuck, Thierry Amar and local indie sound engineer and producer Howard Bilerman, the Hotel2Tango studio, which is now co-owned by Menuck, Amar, Bilerman, and newer partner Radwan Moumneh, started out as a gallery and general art space, originally run by Menuck and Amar, and now enjoys the reputation as one of the best recording studios in Montreal, let alone a growing international reputation. The studio has recorded groundbreaking albums by GYBE, bell orchestre, Fly Pan Am, Land of Talk, Lesbians on Ecstasy, Lhasa de Sela, Pony Up!, Wolf Parade, as well as the acclaimed debut Arcade Fire album, *Funeral*. Aside from its strong associations with Casa del Popolo and Sala Rossa, the Hotel2Tango studio is also closely associated with another groundbreaking and highly influential indie music institution: Constellation Records.

Founded in 1997 by Ian Ilavsky and Don Wilkie, Constellation Records is home to influential Montreal indie artists GYBE, Do Make Say Think, Fly Pan Am and Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra & Tra-La-La Band. Sharing many of the values and ideals of their associates at Hotel2Tango, Casa del Popolo and Sala Rossa, Constellation Records are known for their fiercely anti-corporate, anti-capitalist and anti-globalist political stance. Constellation Records' mission, according to its founders, is to "enact a mode of cultural production that critiques the worst tendencies of the music industry, artistic commodification, and perhaps in some tiny way, the world at large." It also hoped to recover and rebuild an independent music ethic that it saw as commodified and corporatized. (Constellation web site)

The influence of both GYBE and Constellation Records on the structure and overall aesthetic of the Montreal independent music industry is undeniable, as noted by Dan Seligman:

> It was a blueprint for creative community development and investing
> back into the community. I think because of that, and a certain disdain
> for commercial success, there was a groundedness to the Montreal

scene; it was more like experimentation and doing cool things; like an underground aesthetic [rather] than "Oh I just want to be a big rock star and sell lots of records"; it was more about making good music and crafting new things and collaborating. (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

While Constellation Records has been one of the pioneering indie labels in Montreal over the last few years, there are many other indie labels that have cropped up in Montreal over the last ten to fifteen years. These labels have also adopted a similar ethos to give back to and support the indie music scene in Montreal and have helped pave the way for the large number of exciting new artists emerging from Montreal.

Expansion of the Industry

Alien 8 Records, founded in 1996 by Gary Worsley and Sean O'Hara, has played a similar role as Constellation in terms of providing a home for young, up-and-coming indie bands in Montreal. Originally focusing on the noise and experimental genres, Alien 8 has broadened its scope to include a wider range of genres and boasts artists such as, Mitchell Akiyama, CPC Gangbangs, Duchess Says, Tim Hecker, Kiss Me Deadly, Lesbians on Ecstasy, Set Fire to Flames, Sam Shalabi, Soft Canyon and The Unicorns, to name a few[3].

Legendary Quebec indie rock band, Grim Skunk, established their artist-run label, Indica Records, in Montreal in 1997. The label is home to bands, such as Priestess and solo artist Krista LL Muir, as well as successful Francophone artists, such as Xavier Cafeine and Les Trois Accords. Stomp Records (now part of the Union Label Group) was established by Matt Collyer, member of Montreal ska-punk band the Planet Smashers, in 1994 and is home to artists such as Bedouin Soundclash, Saint Alvia,

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[3] Some of the listed artists appear on the rosters of several independent Montreal labels as they have either released different albums with different local labels or they have licensing agreements in place for foreign territories.

legendary Montreal roots-reggae artist Jah Cutta and ska-core band Gangster Politics. While Dare to Care Records' roster includes primarily Francophone artists, some of them have seen success in the US, including Malajube and Les Georges Leningrad. Other more recently established indie labels include Secret City Records, home to artists such as Patrick Watson, Miracle Fortress, Plants and Animals, The Go! Team and Human Highway; as well as, partner labels Semprini Records, home to Ramasutra, Call Me Poupée and Pas Chic Chic; and Signed By Force Records, home to Bionic, Nutsak, Starving Hungry and Trigger Effect.

Similar to some of the very first Canadian indie music labels, there are a few Montreal indie labels run by companies, which also operate in other industry segments. A prominent example is Blue Skies Turn Black, primarily a concert promotion agency, but also a label, which is home to Kiss Me Deadly. Vice Records, run by the entity that publishes the culture magazine, *Vice*, holds the US licenses for Canadian indie artists such as Death from Above 1979, Chromeo and The Stills, and is another example of an indie label being run by a company operating in different sectors of the indie music industry.

Other indie labels have also opted to open branches in Montreal, such as legendary UK electronica label Ninja Tune, home to now-Montreal residents, Kid Koala, Amon Tobin and Sixtoo. Ninja Tune set up their North American headquarters in Montreal in 1996. Toronto indie labels have recently set up shop in Montreal: Last Gang Records, home to Canadian bands Metric, Death From Above 1979 and the New Pornographers; and the Arts & Crafts label, home to legendary Canadian group Broken Social Scene, as well as bell orchestre, Amy Millan, Stars, The Dears, Hidden Cameras, Feist, The Stills and Young Galaxy. It is also important to note that many of the premiere

Canadian independent distribution companies have been and continue to be based in Montreal. Such companies include Cargo, Distribution Fusion III, FAB and Nice.[4]

Aside from Hotel2Tango, other prominent artist-run studios have also cropped up in the last five years, including Breakglass Studios, owned and run by Besnard Lakes founding member Jace Lasek, who has recorded the likes of Sunset Rubdown, Islands, Wolf Parade, Stars, Malajube, Patrick Watson and Young Galaxy; and Friendship Cove, founded in 2005 by musician Graham Van Pelt (Miracle Fortress, Think About Life) and artist Jack Dylan. As with other multi-purpose spaces, Friendship Cove is not only a recording studio, but also a jam space, venue, art gallery and permanent residence.

Given the strong demand to see and hear these bands, many new venues have opened their doors over the last ten years. In addition to Pezzente and Stimac's Casa del Popolo and Sala Rossa, other members of the independent music scene have also given back to the community by creating spaces to host local artists. Concert promoter and local indie rock godfather, Dan Webster, who is one of the founding owners of the independent concert promotion company, Greenland Productions, bought a two-story building in Montreal's Mile End and opened two venues, the Green Room and Main Hall, under the moniker of the Mile End Cultural Centre. In collaboration with venues Casa del Popolo and Sala Rossa, Blue Skies Turn Black, along with its concert promotion and label activities, opened II Motore in September 2008.

Giving Back

This fierce independent stance is what has helped to create and maintain the "new" Montreal indie music scene and indeed, has helped to re-establish and maintain

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[4] While the majority of distribution companies operating in Canada are subsidiaries of the major, transnational record labels, there have been and still are a few independent distribution companies supporting independent labels and artists. Both Cargo, and more recently Distribution Fusion III, however, have closed their doors.

the indie music infrastructure in Montreal, and throughout the rest of Canada. As stated by Howard Bilerman: "What is going on here will continue to go on long after the attention has gone elsewhere. Giving back is an important part of cultural life here." (qtd. in Carr) Clearly, this reinvestment into the community has played and continues to play a crucial role in building and maintaining the indie Montreal music scene. This supportive community aspect of the scene itself can be seen everywhere; but why do members of this scene feel so compelled to "give back"?

Despite what one might initially surmise, based on the diversity found in the Montreal independent music scene (particularly evidenced in the eclecticism of musical genres emerging from the scene; specifically electronica, experimental, and metal; not simply "indie music") the Montreal Anglophone indie music scene is actually quite small. As we've explored, in this small, tight-knit community, most members of the scene participate in more than one way: artists are venue, studio and label owners; bookers are label owners, etc. As most independent artists do not earn enough revenue from their music to make a living, they have to supplement their income through "day jobs"; many of which happen to also be in the scene or industry: working in studios, venues, rehearsal spaces, at label and promotion companies, etc., thus further cementing their ties to the community. The Montreal indie music scene therefore not only fosters an environment in which independent artists can grow their careers, but it also helps to financially support those artists through job creation in the industry.

Everyone seems to not only know everyone else, but also works and plays with everyone else. Many Montreal indie artists play in a number of different bands: for instance, some of the members of Arcade Fire are also in bell orchestre. While this can also be evidenced in other independent Canadian music scenes, for instance, with the seemingly endless and revolving list of members of Toronto's Broken Social Scene, the practice seems to be heightened in Montreal. This multi-level participation not only

provides more incentive to "give back" to the community, but, as in the Arcade Fire/bell orchestre example, also further works to promote and shed more light on the scene by sharing the spotlight with lesser-known artists.

There are numerous other examples of scene participants who perform more than one function in the Montreal indie music industry. The Pop Montreal festival, heading into its eighth year this year, has grown into a world-renowned festival for premiering top Montreal talent, as well as bringing in cutting-edge artists from around the globe. Aside from the week-long music festival that takes place in Montreal's Plateau and Mile End neighbourhoods every October, the festival also hosts Film Pop, Art Pop, Puces Pop, Kids Pop and a political symposium. Throughout the year, Pop Montreal partners with other Montreal festivals, such as the Montreal Fringe Festival, where Pop Montreal runs the "Fringe Pop" stage in the Beer Tent. Pop Montreal also periodically hosts special concert series throughout the year, and supports mini "Pop Off" tours and Pop Montreal showcases at international music festivals like SXSW in Austin, Texas.

Aside from Pop Montreal, there are many other Montreal music festivals that also function to support the industry. M for Montreal is relatively new festival on the seemingly endless Montreal festival scene. Debuting in 2006, M for Montreal was founded by Montreal manager, Sebastien Nasra, and famed UK Glastonbury Festival founder, Martin Elbourne. The festival runs for four days in November and hosts international talent buyers providing the opportunity to showcase "export-ready" Montreal artists.

There are also series of smaller festivals and awards shows including the MiMi's (the Montreal Independent Music Initiative), founded and run by Greenland Productions head, Dan Webster, celebrating the best in the Montreal independent music industry; as well as genre-specific festivals, such as electronica festivals Mutek and MEG (Montreal Electronic Groove), and Suoni per Il Popolo, an avant-garde music festival organized

and hosted by the management of Casa del Popolo and La Sala Rossa. These smaller events coexist with Montreal's bigger and more commercial music festivals, such as the International Jazz Festival, les FrancoFolies, Osheaga, and Heavy Montreal, among others.

The indie Montreal music scene is also heavily supported by local publications, including English and French alternative weeklies, such as the *Montreal Mirror*, *Hour*, *Voir* and *Ici*; free monthly publications, such as *Nightlife*, *Vice* (involved in several segments of the music industry) and *Exclaim*; as well as local college and community stations including CKUT, Radio McGill, Université de Montréal's CISM and K103, Radio Kahnawake. There are also a number of online resources and communities that serve the Montreal indie scene, including the now-defunct Montreal Shows web site, the newly established MontrealMusicScene.com and community-based Indyish.com, an artistic, culture resources and networking site.

Without these areas of support, the Montreal indie music scene would not exist as we know it, nor would it have ever attracted such high level of international attention. The examination of these success factors cements the argument that the support of the indie Montreal scene and the sense of responsibility to give back to the community is paramount to the overall success of those in the scene/community.

Other Forms of Support: The Cultural Tool Kit

While the role played by the scene and community in the support and growth of the Montreal indie music scene is undeniable, what are the roles played by the policies in Grant and Wood's Cultural Tool Kit? We have seen the pertinence of Content Quotas, Subsidies, Expenditure Requirements and the Public Broadcaster with regards to the independent Canadian music industry. Do these government policies and structures have a similar importance for the Montreal independent music scene?

It appears that some policies have more of a direct effect on the support of Montreal independent artists than others. In a very general way, the Public Broadcaster, particularly CBC Radio 3, has been a supporter of the Montreal indie music scene. The "station" has included many Montreal indie artists in its playlists and is partly responsible for exposing these artists to an international fan base. So an argument could be made that CBC Radio 3 is as beneficial to artists in the Montreal indie scene as it is to independent Canadian artists.

While Canadian Content Regulation played a central role in the establishment of the independent Canadian music industry, in the absence of regulations stipulating minimum requirements for the programming of independent Canadian music, commercial radio will continue to elude Montreal independent artists as a viable promotional tool. Dan Seligman confirms this: "In terms of CanCon, most of the artists I've worked with haven't gotten on mainstream radio; just College radio, so I don't know if it has such a significance." (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

Expenditure Requirements play an important role in the development of Montreal indie artists as most Montreal indie music artist/labels have benefited from the funding received for the production of music videos and/or promotional web sites through organizations such as VideoFACT and PromoFACT. Recipients include artists such as The Dears, Sam Roberts, Stars, The Stills, Kid Koala, Wolf Parade, Arcade Fire, Chromeo and Young Galaxy, to name but a few. However, the one tool in Grant and Wood's cultural policy tool kit that is crucial to the support of the Montreal indie music scene is Subsidies.

Virtually every artist, label and festival, referred to in this chapter, has benefited, in one form or another, from federal funding, primarily through the programs that FACTOR manages on behalf of the federal government. Subsidies really do make a

huge difference for independent artists, as described by an independent Montreal musician:

> I am in a band that has had a video made for my band, a record and two European tours partly paid for by FACTOR. If not for FACTOR I can safely say that it would've been near impossible for us to achieve any of this. Most of the records I have produced were also funded by grants. I think these programs really help push Canadian talent of all genres on an international level but unfortunately these grants are drying up with majority of the grants now reserved for more mainstream bands. (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

While adjustments need to be made to some of these programs in order to keep them relevant, Subsidies are absolutely necessary to ensure the survival of the independent Canadian music industry. By opening up some of the programs to offer more funding to truly independent artists, artists with no label or management support, and/or artists working in non-mainstream genres, as well as re-allocating funding from programs such as the recording and video production to domestic and international touring programs, Canadian cultural policies will continue to meet the current needs of independent Canadian artists. With recent cuts to federal cultural funding programs such as the Trade Routes program, there has never been a better time for re-investment in these beneficial activities.

Conclusion

Recent communication tools such as the internet have greatly aided in creating awareness and raising the profile of indie music scenes, such as the Montreal scene. But the most central element, without which, the scene would not exist, is the commitment of those in the scene to the growth and sustenance of the scene. The development of the Montreal indie scene parallels the unique establishment of the Canadian independent music industry in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which the commitment to supporting local talent has played a central role in the current place

Canadian independent artists hold on the global stage. The other key success factor in both the Montreal indie music scene and the Canadian independent music industry has been the central supportive role played by federal cultural policies, ensuring that both Canadian industries and "ordinary" citizens continue to "give back" to independent Canadian cultural communities through federal subsidy programs, expenditure requirements, the public broadcaster and content regulations. The support shown to independent artists is very much a reflection of Canadian culture and society, where high value is placed on community and the supporting of communities, whether it be through social programs, universal public healthcare, or the support of Canadian culture.

CONCLUSION

In order to address the widespread concerns about how the forces of globalization appear to have rapidly eroded independent cultural expression over the past twenty years, we need to examine the past to gain insight into the present and future. Using Vincent Mosco's three entry points for a political economic analysis (commodification, spatialization and structuration), I have shown some of the underlying, historical reasons for the domination of the global music industry by multinational corporations. By tracing the history of the development of the American-dominated global music industry, I have also demonstrated the various ways in which the multinationals have carefully maintained and developed these power structures despite the many societal and technological innovations of the last century.

Traditionally, as we have seen, it has been extremely difficult to carve out any kind of space for independent voices to be heard in the global music industry. This has been particularly the case in Canada, where government has stepped in to offer solutions to this problem, in the form of cultural policies. The enactment of the various cultural policy tools in Peter Grant and Chris Wood's Cultural Tool Kit (Domestic Ownership Regulation, Competition Policy, Public Broadcasting, Expenditure Requirements, Subsidies and Content Regulation), all effectively help to carve out a space for independent voices to be promoted and heard. Indeed it was the institution of Canadian Content regulation in 1970 that truly gave birth to the Canadian independent music industry. However, I have argued that it was not only the institution of Canadian cultural policies that has helped to carve out a space for Canadian independent artists on the global music stage, but also the central role played by technological innovations over the last forty years.

The role of technological innovation cannot be denied when examining the power shifts that have taken place within the global music industry. Control over this industry, rooted in the power exerted by the multinationals over the means of production and distribution, is being systematically undermined as access barriers to the means of production and distribution are lowered, creating an influx of diverse, new independent voices. It can be argued that the death of the music industry is immanent, citing the sharp decline in record sales, partly due to internet piracy. However, as we have seen, the emergence of a music industry that is more diverse and accessible to distinct and diverse voices, signals something quite different: a rebirth. My research and analysis lead me to concur with this hopeful perspective, that we are experiencing, in the words of Montreal band Stars: "The Beginning After the End."

There is no doubt that despite the massive changes the global music industry has undergone over the last decade, the multinationals continue to largely control the global music industry. However, due to the technological advances such as access to affordable recording equipment, file compression formats, illegal and legal digital file download sites, the vast distribution network found in the internet, and social-networking and user-generated web sites like MySpace and YouTube, many more independent artists can and are being heard. As I have demonstrated, this is particularly true of Canadian independent artists.

The Role of Canadian Cultural Policies

It has become clear in the course of this study that Canadian Cultural Policies were instrumental in the birth of the Canadian independent music industry. Furthermore, over the last forty years, these policies have evolved to offer the industry increasing levels of support. That said, with the influx of technological tools that have helped reduce access barriers to record and distribute independent music, one may ask if these

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policies continue to be relevant. While independent Canadian artists may not need as much funding to record and distribute their albums, as we have seen, they continue to desperately need funding to help them stand out from among the millions of other independent artists vying for our attention, and to help develop their careers through promotional and revenue generating touring. We have also seen that more funding needs to be allocated to truly independent artists and those artists working in non-mainstream genres. Given the recent cuts to federal funding, an argument can also be made to retain similar levels of expenditure requirements, if not grow them, to continue to financially assist independent Canadian artists. It is also necessary to insist on the continued support of the CBC, particularly its indie music focused "third" channel, CBC Radio 3.

We have seen the crucial role Canadian Content regulation has played in the development of the Canadian independent music industry. Now that radio broadcasters have seen that there is a market for Canadian music and in fact, even a demand for it, we can only hope that the CIRAA petition to include minimum independent music requirements (within the current 35% Canadian content requirement) will eventually be adopted in order to further create promotional channels for independent Canadian music.

I have furthermore demonstrated the key role Canadian cultural policies had and continue to have on the independent Canadian music industry; and as the industry continues to evolve, these policies become increasingly important to the survival and growth of indie Canadian music. However, the importance of the broader philosophical meaning and representation of Canadian cultural policies must also be explored. Canada has a long tradition regarding the concern for the social welfare of Canadian citizens, exemplified by programs such as the national healthcare system, unemployment insurance programs, and universal childcare benefits.

The institution of federal cultural polices to support Canadian art and culture is another way Canadians support and give back to their country. Not only is this ideology displayed in very tangible ways, through the institution of various federal cultural policies, but also through more intangible means. Examples of this can be seen in the initial rallying of the fledgling Canadian independent music industry in the late 1960s, to the more recent loud and national protests against federal cultural funding cuts, to the sense of support and "giving back to the community" witnessed in the Montreal indie music scene. It is perhaps this sense of responsibility to arts and culture and to the communities that create them that distinguishes the Canadian independent music industry. This, I would argue, has played a crucial role in its growth over the last forty years and will sustain it well into the 21st century. Given the current state of the global music industry, the Canadian independent music industry will need all the support it can muster.

The Future of Independent Music Industries

The current dire state of the global economy is not only hurting the multinationals; the independents are also feeling the pinch. In February 2009, legendary independent American-based record label Touch and Go was, due to the economic situation in the US, forced to discontinue the manufacturing and distribution of numerous smaller independent labels. It is important to note that this was a practice they were able to maintain for over twenty years. (Kot) The Canadian independent music industry has not been spared some of the financial fallout either: December 2008 saw the filing of bankruptcy protection by one of Canada's largest independent distributors, Distribution Fusion III. It closed subsequently, in January 2009. Fusion's president Jim West cited a steep decline in catalogue sales as one of the primary reasons for the demise of the company. (Thompson) The neo-conservative leanings of the current Canadian

government, apparent in their cuts to federal funding programs Trade Routes and PromArts in the fall of 2008, does not bode well either for an independent industry heavily reliant on federal funding programs.

Aside from the economy, the independent music industry, like the multinationals, is also grappling with the changing business models in order to stay afloat. While the indies are not as hard hit as the multinationals by the dramatic drop in record sales over the last ten years, their bottom lines are still ultimately affected. As we have seen, compared to the multinationals, independent record labels have traditionally structured their recording contracts with independent artists in a more egalitarian and mutually beneficial fashion. In order to stay afloat financially, however, the indie record companies will also need to devise alternate business models.

Over the last few years, "360 deals" have gained in popularity: a label takes their standard cut of CD and digital download sales, but also earns a percentage of event ticket profits, merchandise sales, endorsement deals and anything else that uses the artist's brand or music. This is particularly true of the majors. At Warner Music, for example, these deals are now mandatory. (Leeds) In theory, 360 deals propose a "win/win" situation for the artist and for the label; in reality, there are many concerns about the structure of these deals. An important caveat is that the artist signed to the deal is more deeply indebted to the label than a more traditional deal. Furthermore, concerns arise over whether or not the label will always have the artist's best in interest at heart, given the vested interest the label would now have in so many revenue streams. Perhaps it is too early in the adoption of this kind of model to draw any conclusions. Given the low implementation of this model amongst indie labels, however, this model does not look terribly promising for independent artists and labels.

While recent technological changes have proven to be extremely challenging for the major labels, for the most part, they have opened many doors for the independent

music industry and artists. However, independent labels and artists still face serious challenges in the new digital music industry. Beyond the difficulty of discovering new ways to be noticed in the sea of artists striving for attention, independent artists are also encountering additional entry barriers in the new digital industry. For instance, despite recently launching an "Indie" section on the home page of iTunes, in order for independent artists to sell their tracks through this system, artists must either be signed with an independent label who has secured iTunes distribution or, sign with an iTunes aggregator (i.e. IODA – Independent Online Distribution Alliance - or CD Baby). Similar barriers apply concerning selling ringtones and other mobile audio content, as artists must sign a licensing agreement with a mobile content aggregator in order to attain distribution with the wireless carriers. The likelihood of this happening with an unknown artist is next to impossible.

For many emerging artists, the new technologies now available also create a false sense of security. The idea that "anyone can be an artist; all you need are the tools to produce and distribute your product" is very misleading, as noted by Dan Seligman:

> It's a lot easier [now] to distribute your music. It's easier to record your music. But that doesn't mean that the sound quality or musicianship is better. The number one thing is that it has to be good music. Just because you record something, doesn't give it value. (Personal conversation, March 3, 2009)

In short, while the benefits of the new digital reality are clear, as it slowly transforms the global music industry as well as the independent labels and independent artists, there are still challenges that need to be overcome. In Canada, more changes are expected in connection with the recent New Media hearings at the CRTC, determining if and how the internet can be regulated, via Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and the discussion of an ISP levy to cover losses content providers have experienced due to internet piracy. (CRTC web site) At the initial presentation made by CIRPA at the New Media Hearings on February 18th 2009, Duncan McKie, President

and CEO of CIRPA, interestingly, clearly states that the organization is not proposing any kind of "payment for use" or rights clearance to ensure that copyright holders are paid for their work, as, Mr. McKie notes, this would simply "legitimize the ongoing downloading of unauthorized materials from the internet" (CIRPA web site) Instead, CIRPA argues that should the CRTC define the internet as a broadcaster, it should then be subject to he same cultural policies, including Content Regulation, Expenditure Requirements and Subsidies, as current terrestrial broadcasters. (CIRPA web site). Given the proven success of the current model in place, one can only hope for a similar successful outcome for independent Canadian artists vis-à-vis the application of this model to the internet.

The Future of the Montreal Indie Music Scene

Despite all these changes, however, some things remain the same: while the intensity of the buzz surrounding the "explosion" of the Montreal music scene has waned a bit, the volume and quality of indie music coming out of the city has not. The Montreal indie music scene continues as it once did, seemingly unaffected by all the attention of international publications in 2005, proving that the "giving back" model works. While more groundbreaking artists are emerging from this city (e.g., Hollerado, Human Highway and Karkwa), and more venues are opening (like Il Motore and the St. Ambroise Centre), the Montreal indie music scene still faces a few challenges.

Aside from a few very tangible difficulties, including some recent issues with municipal zoning and licensing that has seen the indefinite closure of Main Hall and a recent temporary closure of Casa del Popolo, the Montreal indie music scene also faces a few more intangible battles. Montreal's indie music scene, while theoretically perceived to be open, welcoming and supportive, is sometimes inaccessible for those not already

in "the scene," or for those without the appropriate kind or level of cultural capital; Montreal's scene can at times, be perceived as elitist.

The left-leaning, socialist-influenced political stance embraced and evangelized by some members of the industry and scene, are at times, so stringent, that they not only invite contempt for their inflexibility in ideals, but, due to this inflexibility, also result in claims of hypocrisy: while idealistically eschewing the commodification of music in any shape or form, like any other artist, these members of the scene continue to sell their music and charge for entrance into their shows.

Ironically, the degree to which a relatively small core of like-minded individuals control much of the independent, predominantly Anglophone music industry in Montreal (from venues, to recording studios, to rehearsal spaces, to labels, etc.) could also raise some concerns. However, despite these issues, I would argue that it is clear what an overall, positive contribution the Montreal indie music industry has made not only to the Montreal independent music industry, but also to the Canadian independent music industry — and, I would even venture, independent music industries the world over. One can only hope that the scene will continue to grow and stimulate the emergence of other, similar scenes elsewhere: encouraging the production and dissemination of independent music, as a dynamic, diverse range of voices cutting through the noise of the Top 40.

Much has already been written on many aspects of the transforming music industry. From the research I have conducted, however, there has been very little written on the subject from a distinctly Canadian perspective. My hope is that this study will contribute to the ongoing investigation and understanding of the challenges already overcome by the indie music industry, those still facing the industry and provide a look forward to what the future may hold, specifically, for independent Canadian music artists.

If we take inspiration from the recent explosion of the Montreal indie music scene and its determined march onwards, one can cautiously express hope for a future where

the dominance of culture by a few powerful parties is a thing of the past. We are being given reason to hope that this new era will allow for the maintenance and growth of the space required for increasing artistic diversity... just perhaps, after all, we are beginning to experience, "The Beginning After the End."

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www.factor.ca

Let's Fix CanCon
http://www.letsfixcancon.ca/

PromArts Program
http://www.international.gc.ca/culture/arts/menu-en.asp

Radio Starmaker Fund
https://www.starmaker.ca/

RIAA
http://www.riaa.com/

Trade Routes
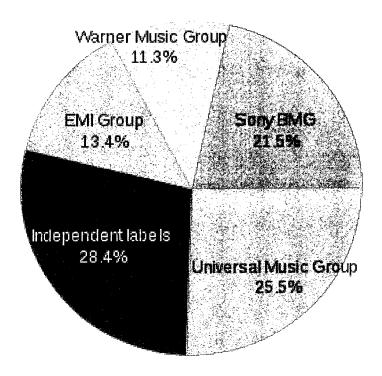http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/route/pcrc-trcp/index-eng.cfm

Appendix A — Overview of the "Big Four" Multinational Record Companies

Overview of the "Big Four" Multinational Record Companies

	Universal Music	Sony Music	EMI (Electric & Musical Industries Ltd.)	Warner Music Group
CEO	Doug Morris	Rolf Schmidt-Holtz	Guy Hands	Edgar Bronfman Jr.
Subsidiary of	Vivendi	Sony Corporation of America	Terra Firma Capital Partners	N/A
Parent Country of Origin	France	Japan	England	N/A
Headquarters	USA: Santa Monica, CA & New York, NY	USA: New York, NY	England: London	USA: New York, NY
Revenues for 2007	$6.14 billion	$4.6 billion	$2.85 billion	$3.385 Billion
Market Share	25.50%	21.00%	13.4%	11.30%
Merger History Overview	2006 - UMG is 100% owned by French media conglomerate Vivendi SA once acquiring the remaining 20% ownership of Panasonic. 2004 - 80 percent of the Vivendi Universal Entertainment (branch was sold to GE, forming NBC Universal, with VU retaining a 20 percent stake. 2000 - conflicting interest in Seagram's entertainment division was acquired by the Vivendi Group resulting in Vivendi Universal (VU) 1996 - MCA Music Entertainment Group changes name to Universal Music Group. 1995 - Seagram's acquires MCA Music Group, Universal Studios, PolyGram and Deutsche Grammophon 1990 - Japanese Corporation Matsushita (now Panasonic) acquires MCA Music Group 1962 - Became known as MCA Music Entertainment Group after the acquisition of Decca Records USA 1934 - Formed as part of Decca Records USA	August 2008 - Sony buys 50% share of Sony-BMG and results in 100% ownership - name changes from Sony-BMG to Sony Music. 2004 - Sony Music and BMG merge to form Sony-BMG 1991 - Renamed the company Sony Music Entertainment 1987 - Sony acquired CBS Records for US $2 billion 1968 - CBS Records merged with Japan's Sony Corporation to form CBS/Sony Records 1961 - Became known as "CBS Records" 1938 - Acquired by Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) 1888 - Columbia Phonograph Company Established	2007 - EMI was acquired by Terra Firma Capital Partners 2006 - EMI attempted to buy Warner Music Group; the bid was rejected. Warner Music Group countered by offering to buy EMI. EMI rejected the offer. 1996 - Thorn-EMI shareholders vote in favour of demerger proposals. The resulting media company is known by the name EMI Group PLC. 1992 - Thorn-EMI buys Virgin Records 1991 - Thorn-EMI bought the remaining 50% 1989 - Thorn-EMI bought a 50% interest in Chrysalis Records" 1979 - THORN Electrical Industries merged with EMI Ltd. to form Thorn-EMI 1971 - Electic & Musical Industries Ltd changed its name to EMI Ltd. and the subsidiary Gramophone Company became EMI Records Ltd. 1957 - Electic & Musical Industries Ltd entered the American market by acquiring 96% of the stock of Capitol Records 1931 - Electic & Musical Industries Ltd. formed from the merger of the UK Columbia Graphophone Company and the Gramophone Company	2006 - EMI attempted to buy Warner Music Group; the bid was rejected Warner Music Group countered by offering to buy EMI. EMI rejected the offer. 2004 - Warner Music Group sold to investor group lead by Edgar Bronfman Jr. 2003 - AOL purchases Time Warner 1996 - Time Warner acquires Turner Broadcasting 1990 - Warner Communications merges with Time 1970 - Kinney bought Elektra Records and its sister label Nonesuch Records and assembled the labels into a group known as Warner-Elektra-Atlantic, also called WEA for short. or Warner Music Group 1969 - Warner Bros.-Seven Arts was sold to the Kinney National Company (later known as Warner Communications). 1967 - Warner Bros. was sold to Seven Arts Productions (forming Warner Bros.-Seven Arts) - also purchased Atlantic Records 1958 - Warner Brothers Records founded 1929 - Started as Music Publishers Holding Company (MPHC) - later, Warner/Chappell Publishing; founded by Jack Warner
Select Subsidiaries	Island Def Jam Music Group Interscope-Geffen-A&M The Universal Motown/Universal Republic Group Sanctuary Records Machete Music Decca Records Universal Music Group Nashville Verve Records Universal Music Publishing Group	Columbia Records Columbia Nashville Epic Records Legacy Recordings RCA Records Sony BMG Masterworks Sony BMG Nashville	Angel Astralwerks Blue Note Capitol Capitol Nashville EMI EMI Classics EMI CMG EMI Televisa Music Mute Parlophone Virgin	Atlantic Records Group Warner Bithers Records Inc. Rhino Records Ryko Corporation Independent Label Group WEA International
Sampling of Top Selling Artists	50 Cent Akon Bon Jovi Gwen Stefani Kanye West Lil Wayne Mariah Carey Rihanna The Jonas Brothers U2	AC/DC Alicia Keys Beyonce Celine Dion Chris Brown Christina Aguilera Evanescence Jennifer Lopez Justin Timberlake Michael Jackson Ozzy Osborne Will Smith	Beastie Boys Coldplay David Bowie Keith Urban Lenny Kravitz Moby Norah Jones Paul McCartney Radiohead The Beatles The Rolling Stones	Alanis Morisette Diddy Enya Eric Clapton Faith Hill Frank Sinatra Kid Rock Madonna My Chemical Romance Nickelback Smashing Pumpkins TI T.Pain
Web Site	http://www.universalmusic.com/	http://www.sonymusic.com/	http://www.emigroup.com/Default.htm	http://www.wmg.com/

* The data contained in this document was sourced from a variety of locations and has been placed together to the best of my abilities in order to reflect the most accurate and up to date overview of the current "Big Four" record labels. That being said, this document should be treated with caution because of the large number and varying quality of the sources involved.

Appendix B — Global Music Market Sales Shares

Global Music Market Sales Shares

Global music market sales shares, according to International
Federation of the Phonographic Industries (2005)

Appendix C — Cultural Policy Tool Kit Matrix

Cultural Policy Tool Kit Matrix

Cultural Policy Tool	Canadian Independent Music Industry Relevance
1 Content Quota Regulation	Canadian Content or "CanCon" 35% required Canadan Content for all radio and television broadcasters* CIRAA petition to institute minimums for independent music within existing content minimums: Proposed 33.33% for daytime programming and 50% for nighttime programming
2 Subsidies	Primarily administerd through the Canada Music Fund (Originally the Sound Recording Development Program or SRDP) Primarily managed for the Federal Government by FACTOR and sister organization Musicaction Radio Starmaker Fund also provides funding to the independent music industry but is 100% comprised of voluntary donations by private radio
3 Expenditure Requirements	A CRTC-mandated portion of advertising revenue generated by broadcasters must be re-allocated to the independent music industry in the form aof subsidies Radio contributes to FACTOR and Musicaction Television contributions to the VideoFACT, PromoFACT and MaxFACT programs
4 Public Broadcaster	The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) CBC Radio and Television stations (specifically radio, due to its importance as a marketing tool for music) CBC Radio 1, CBC Radio 2 CBC Radio 3 - Internet, Satellite Radio and Podcast only (of particular importance for the independent Canadian music industry and artists)
5 Competition Policy	Benefits the Canadian independent music industry more indirectly by regulating competition primarily within the broadcasting industry
6 Domestic Ownership Regulation	Benefits the Canadian independent music industry more indirectly by regulating domestic ownership primarily within the broadcasting industry

*with the exception of some community/specialty radio stations

Appendix D — Summary Protocol Form & Sample Interview Questions

Concordia
UNIVERSITY

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SGW Campus - GM 1000
t 514.848.2424x4888 • f 514.848.4290

SUMMARY PROTOCOL FORM
UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

IMPORTANT:

Approval of a *Summary Protocol Form* (SPF) must be issued by the applicable Human Research Ethics Committee prior to beginning any research project using human participants.

Research funds cannot be released until appropriate certification has been obtained.

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF RESEARCH:

Please submit a signed original plus THREE copies of this form to the UHREC c/o the Office of Research, GM-1000. Allow one month for the UHREC to complete the review.

FOR GRADUATE or UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH:

- if your project is included in your supervising faculty member's SPF, no new SPF is required

- if your project is supported by external (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC) or internal (e.g. CASA, FRDP) funds, the supervising faculty member must submit a new SPF on behalf of the student as per faculty research above. The supervising faculty member MUST be listed as the PI.

- if your project is NOT supported by external (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC) or internal (e.g. CASA, FRDP) funds, the student must submit a new SPF to the relevant departmental committee. Contact your department for specific details.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This document is a form-fillable word document. Please open in Microsoft Word, and tab through the sections, clicking on checkboxes and typing your responses. The form will expand to fit your text. Handwritten forms will not be accepted. If you have technical difficulties with this document, you may type your responses and submit them on another sheet. Incomplete or omitted responses may cause delays in the processing of your protocol.

1. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Please check ONE of the boxes below :

☒ This application is for a new protocol..

☐ This application is a modification or an update of an existing protocol:
Previous protocol number (s): _____

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Principal Investigator/ Instructor (must be Concordia faculty or staff member)	Department	Internal Address	Phone Number	E-mail
Shevaughn Battle	Media Studies	7141 Sherbrooke Street West CJ 3.230, 3rd Floor Montreal, Quebec Canada H4B 1R6	(514) 289-9111	naughn@yahoo.com

Co-Investigators / Collaborators	University / Department	E-mail
N/A	N/A	N/A

Research Assistants	Department / Program	E-mail
N/A	N/A	N/A

3. PROJECT AND FUNDING SOURCES

Project Title:	Canadian Cultural Policy and the Independent Canadian Music Industry (TBC)

In the table below, please list all existing internal and external sources of research funding, and associated information, which will be used to support this project. Please include anticipated start and finish dates for the project(s). Note that for awarded grants, the grant number is REQUIRED. If a grant is an application only, list APPLIED instead.

Funding Source	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Period Start	End
N/A				
N/A				
N/A				
N/A				
N/A				

4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH OR ACTIVITY

Please provide a brief overall description of the project or research activity. Include a description of the benefits which are likely to be derived from the project. Alternatively, you may attach an existing project description (e.g. from a grant proposal).

Has this research been funded by a peer-reviewed granting agency (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC, Hexagram)?

☐ Yes   Agency: _____

☒ No   If your research is beyond minimal risk, please complete and attach the Scholarly Review Form, available here: http://oor.concordia.ca/REC/forms.shtml

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6. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

a) Please describe the group of people who will participate in this project.

I will be interviewing a variety of individuals who are either presently working in the independent Canadian music industry or who have worked in the industry in the past. These individuals include musical artists, managers, label representatives, distribution representatives, those working in music retail, marketing, promotions, publicity, radio and television broadcast, journalists, venue owners and concert promoters, bookers, festival directors, among others.

I will also be interviewing those working in governmental cultural agencies as well as those working in the multi-national music industry.

b) Please describe in detail how participants will be recruited to participate. Please attach to this protocol draft versions of any recruitment advertising, letters, etcetera which will be used.

Due to my past experience working in the independent Canadian music industry, I will be individually targeting and contacting the majority of the participants personally. I will either be asking former colleagues to introduce me to those with whom I do not have a previous relationship or I will be making "cold calls" to contact those individuals.

Participation in this study will not be remunerated. I will be relying solely on the individual's personal interest in participating in the study.

c) Please describe in detail how participants will be treated throughout the course of the research project. Include a summary of research procedures, and information regarding the training of researchers and assistants. Include sample interview questions, draft questionnaires, etcetera, as appropriate.

For those interview subjects located in Montreal, I will be meeting with them in person at a convenient location and time for the interview subject. The interview should last approximately 1 (one) hour and I will be relying on prepared questions (please see attached sample questions) to guide the interview.

Should the interview subject be located outside Montreal, I will either conduct a phone interview on a day/time that is convenient to the interview subject or send the questions to the participants via email. Interview subjects will be asked to answer and send the

questions back to me within a reasonable time-frame for both the participant (depending on their schedules) as well as the researcher. The face-to-face and phone interviews will be recorded. Email interviews will be stored both in my email account as well a be transferred to word processing files and stored on my computer.

Should private and confidential information surface during the course of the interview session and the interview subject wish that it remain private and confidential, this information will be classified as "off the record" and will not be transcribed, in the case of a face-to-face or phone interview. It will be assumed that whatever answers are written in an email interview are "on the record".

7. INFORMED CONSENT

a) Please describe how you will obtain informed consent from your participants. A copy of your written consent form or your oral consent script must be attached to this protocol. *Please note: written consent forms must follow the format of the template included at the end of this document.*

Consent forms from participants will be obtained in writing. Whether the interview will take place in person, on the phone or via email, the attached consent form will be distributed to all participants upon their agreement to participate in the interview. Consent forms will be signed and collected before the interview begins. Two copies of the consent form will be signed by both the researcher and the participant; one copy for the participant and one for the researcher.

b) In some cultural traditions, individualized consent as implied above may not be appropriate, or additional consent (e.g. group consent; consent from community leaders) may be required. If this is the case with your sample population, please describe the appropriate format of consent and how you will obtain it.

As my research will not involve any specific cultural or religious or any other groups, written consent as implied above should suffice.

8. DECEPTION AND FREEDOM TO DISCONTINUE

a) Please describe the nature of any deception, and provide a rationale regarding why it must be used in your protocol. Is deception absolutely necessary for your research design? Please note that deception includes, but is not limited to, the following: deliberate presentation of false information; suppression of material information; selection of information designed to mislead; selective disclosure of information.

There is no deception involved in the interview process.

b) How will participants be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time? Will the nature of the project place any limitations on this freedom (e.g. documentary film)?

The participants will be informed that they are free to discontinue the interview at any time via the consent form they will read and sign before the interview begins.

The nature of the project will not place any limitations on this freedom.

9. RISKS AND BENEFITS

a) Please identify any foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants. This includes low-level risk or any form of discomfort resulting from the research procedure. When appropriate, indicate arrangements that have been made to ascertain that subjects are in "healthy" enough condition to undergo the intended research procedures. Include any "withdrawal" criteria.

There are no foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants.

b) Please indicate how the risks identified above will be minimized. Also, if a potential risk or harm should be realized, what action will be taken? Please attach any available list of referral resources, if applicable.

N/A

c) Is there a likelihood of a particular sort of "heinous discovery" with your project (e.g. disclosure of child abuse; discovery of an unknown illness or condition; etcetera)? If so, how will such a discovery be handled?

There is no likelihood of a particular sort of "heinous discovery" with this project as the subject of the research is not of a personal nature.

10. DATA ACCESS AND STORAGE

a) Please describe what access research participants will have to study results, and any debriefing information that will be provided to participants post-participation.

Research participants will have access to my Master's Thesis as it will be a publicly available document. Should the interview subjects be interested in obtaining any other information concerning the outcome of the research, they will be invited to contact me directly via the contact information listed on the consent form.

b) Please describe the path of your data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal. Include specific details on short and long-term storage (format and location), who will have access, and final destination (including archiving, or any other disposal or destruction methods).

Data collected from my face-to-face and phone interviews will be recorded on a portable recorder. Data from email interviews will initially be stored in my email account as well as in a word processing document format. Short term, these audio and word processing files will be stored on the hard drive of my personal laptop computer, for easy access while writing my thesis, with a CD(s)/DVD(s) back up. Long term storage plans for this data will be on an external back up hard drive as well as on CD(s)/DVD(s) stored in my personal home office. The only people with access to my laptop, external back up drive, CD(s)/DVD(s) and personal home office is myself.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESULTS

Please identify what access you, as a researcher, will have to your participant(s) identity(ies):

☐	Fully Anonymous	Researcher will not be able to identify who participated at all. Demographic information collected will be insufficient to identify individuals.
☐	Anonymous results, but identify who participated	The participation of individuals will be tracked (e.g. to provide course credit, chance for prize, etc) but it would be impossible for collected data to be linked to individuals.
☐	Pseudonym	Data collected will be linked to an individual who will only be identified by a fictitious name / code. The researcher will not know the "real" identity of the participant.
☐	Confidential	Researcher will know "real" identity of participant, but this identity will not be disclosed.
☐	Disclosed	Researcher will know and will reveal "real" identity of participants in results / published material.
☒	Participant Choice	Participant will have the option of choosing which level of disclosure they wish for their "real" identity.
☐	Other (please describe)	

a) If your sample group is a particularly vulnerable population, in which the revelation of their identity could be particularly sensitive, please describe any special measures that you will take to respect the wishes of your participants regarding the disclosure of their identity.

My sample group is not a particularly vulnerable population therefore the revelation of their identity would not be particularly sensitive. Should participants not wish to be identified, they will be given that choice and that choice will be respected.

b) In some research traditions (e.g. action research, research of a socio-political nature) there can be concerns about giving participant groups a "voice". This is especially the case with groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed in their cultural location. If these concerns are relevant for your participant group, please describe how you will address them in your project.

As the research group is not a pre-determined group or community, there are no concerns about giving participant groups a "voice".

Project Description

Summary
The focus of this project will be the examination of the role Canadian cultural policies have played in stemming some of the negative effects of globalization on independent Canadian music artists as well as the role that cultural policy now plays in the new reality of the recent emergence of independent Canadian artists on the global music scene.

The objective of this project is therefore to map out and explore some of the issues facing emerging, independent (rock, urban, electronic) musical artists in a globalized context. This study will investigate and explore issues surrounding the reasons for the traditional dominance of the global music industry by a handful of transnational media corporations as well as the more recent technological advancements that have led to new production, distribution and marketing opportunities for independent artists.

Most importantly, however, I will be exploring the cultural policies that have been implemented in order to curb the dominance of the multinational corporations and the exploration and development of an understanding of the relevance and effectivity of these cultural policies in supporting and developing the careers of emerging, independent musical artists in the face of the rapidly changing global music landscape. I will be examining these issues specifically within a Canadian context.

Methodology
This project will take the form of an exploratory, structural mapping of the structures of the global music industry in a policy/political/cultural context and will be approached from a political economic perspective in order to elucidate the roles played by the various stakeholders involved in the global popular music industry: transnational media corporations, the "Big Four" major record labels (Universal Music, Sony Music Entertainment, EMI and Warner Music Group), independent labels, industry lobby groups, industry associations and unions, the independent Canadian music industry, independent artists, government, public interest, music consumers, and broadcasters. I will also specifically be focusing on the rise of the independent Montreal music scene from 2004 to 2006; this will form my case study through which I hope to draw broader conclusions about the changing structures of the music industry and the role played by Canadian cultural policy in this ever-changing landscape.

The recording options I will employ in my study will be the notes and interpretations gathered from the examination of both my primary and secondary sources. I will also conduct interviews with individuals who have worked and/or are currently working in the Canadian independent music industry, government, as well as independent musical artists in order to lend credibility and timely information to this study.

Expected Significance of the Study

Through this study, I will explore the ways in which Canadian cultural policies either help and/or hinder emerging Canadian independent artists, as well as develop an understanding as to how these artists can maintain and represent their culture while competing within the global commercial music industry in the age of globalization.

Ultimately, I hope that this study will further contribute to the ongoing discussion of the effects of globalization on emergent, independent artists and the ways in which they can further be supported and indeed, carve out more of a niche in the US-dominated, global commercial music industry.

Sample Interview Questions:

- What kind of role do you think Canadian cultural policy has played historically in the development of the independent Canadian music industry? In your opinion, have they positively or negatively contributed to the development of the industry? How so?

- What do you think the role Canadian cultural policy currently plays in the independent music industry? What kind of role should it play?

- Are Canadian cultural policies still relevant for independent Canadian musical artists and/or for the independent Canadian music industry? How?

- What areas of Canadian cultural policies do you believe to be most beneficial to independent Canadian artists/the independent Canadian music industry and why?

- What Canadian cultural policies do you believe are least beneficial to independent Canadian artists/the independent Canadian music industry and why?

- What elements are most responsible, in your opinion, for the significant increase in attention garnered by independent Canadian artists, particularly those artists from Montreal, on both the national and international stage?